GUARDIAN WEEKLY
April 21 1996

Golf US Masters

Comeback king Faldo takes crown

David Davies in Augusta

GREG NORMAN did the unthinkable, and Nick Faldo the unbelievable, when the Australian dissipated a six-shot overnight lead and handed a third green coat and US Masters title to the Englishman at the Augusta National golf club, Georgia, on Sunday.

Norman, who has never won at Augusta, seems fated not to. This was by far his best chance but he threw it away comprehensively. His lead had gone after 11 holes, he was two behind after 12 and his reputation as a man who can find more ways to lose than to win was dreadfully enhanced. Norman took a six-over-par 78, and Faldo, emulating Sandy Lyle in 1988, got down in two from a fairway bunker at the 18th for a birdie and a round of 67, five under par.

His total of 276, 12 under, gave him the title by five shots and he joins Gary Player, Jimmy Demaret and Sam Snead as a three-times Masters winner. Only Arnold Palmer (four) and Jack Nicklaus (six) have more. Norman showed signs of fallibility straight away when he drove into the trees at the 1st, recovered into a greenside bunker, came out to eight feet and missed.

He did birdie the 2nd, although his second shot cleared the green and pitched into the spectators and he had to chip from 30 feet. Faldo, meanwhile, had also missed the green but he came out of a bunker to three feet. Another stroke of Norman's lead was eroded at the 4th, where he was bunkered, but he got it back at the 5th where Faldo was *in the sand. The counter-punching* continued at the 6th where Faldo hit a magnificent shot to five feet for a birdie to close the gap to four shots again and he then made it three with another birdie at the long 8th.

Norman, with an ungainly and unbalanced swing, hit his second into the woods and had to struggle for his par. Faldo, after two good shots, hit a poor pitch, which so disgusted him that he turned his back on it. But then he holed from 21 feet and he was mollified.

Another Australian mistake at the 9th, where Norman misjudged his second and saw it run back down the fairway some 20 yards, meant that Faldo was only two behind at the turn. It could have been one, for the Englishman's birdie putt, perfectly paced, hit the hole and just stayed out. Faldo was out in a two-under-par 34, Norman in 38.

By now the tension was palpable. It was, in any case, a hot and humid day with only an occasional swirling breeze to relieve spectators and players. Norman, given to biting his lip anyway, was in danger of chewing through it and there was none of the self-assurance that had characterised his play on that magnificent day in 1993 at Royal St George's when he produced a final round of 64 to win the Open. The Australian missed the green at the 10th, to drop yet another shot and, if Norman's nerves were getting ragged, it showed on the 11th green.

This has been the site of both Faldo's wins in the Masters; the place where he beat, in play-offs, both Scott Hoch and Raymond Floyd, and now he saw Norman take three putts from no more than 12 feet. The first one, for a birdie, looked in all the way but shaved the hole and ran two feet past. The Australian stood for ages over the return putt and then pushed it stiffly past the right edge.

The crowd at Amen Corner gasped but it was only a murmur compared to their reaction when, off the tee of the short 12th, Norman dumped his shot into Rae's Creek. It was the second day in succession he had done so but this time there was no bogey four awaiting. He pitched to 12 feet and missed.

The double bogey meant that in the space of 12 holes Norman had turned a six-stroke lead into a two-stroke deficit and by now the crowds were stunned into silence.

While Norman sweated for his five, Faldo stood in the shade, keeping cool, conserving his energy.

Faldo hit the better drive of the two at the 13th, with Norman running off into the pines on the right. He was forced to lay up short of the creek and then Faldo took ages over what to play. First it was an iron, then a wood, then an iron again, a three-iron as it turned out, and he found the green with it. Norman pitched to 14 feet and, for the first time in the round, hit a firm, positive putt straight into the hole. All it did, unfortunately for him, was to keep him two strokes behind.

Norman needed something dramatic and he almost got it at the long 15th. Chipping from some 60 feet, he hit the hole for an eagle but saw the ball spin away. The Australian fell to the ground in an agony of frustration.

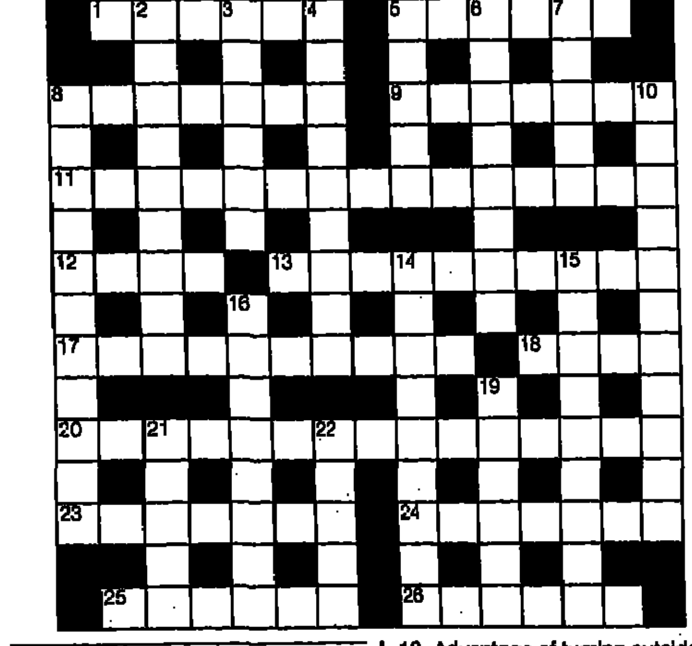
There was, however, another agony to come. Norman's tee shot at the water-strewn 16th was hit fractionally fat, it did not make the carry and plunged into the pond. It was awful to watch and deeply depressing. Even Faldo looked sad, rubbing the back of his head, wondering how all this could happen to the man who had led from the start with a magnificent, record-equalling 63 in the first round. The Australian took another double-bogey five and was now in danger of not even finishing second. He walked off the green, head bowed, amid a profound silence.

● Severiano Ballesteros, a man who used to reduce the long holes to glorified par fours, had only three birdies in 20 attempts this year and was one over par on them overall. He was 11 over par for the tournament and said afterwards: "I think I have reached the bottom. But when you are always downstairs you can only go upstairs."



Final act . . . as Nick Faldo's birdie putt on the 18th clinches an astonishing victory, Greg Norman has nothing left to offer but his congratulations PHOTOGRAPH: STEPHEN MUNDAY

Cryptic crossword by Mercury



Across

1, 5 Picked rush job one wants to do? (6,6)
8 Theatre worker certainly on around midnight (7)
9 I'd taken a member a beer, transfixed (7)
11 One may get to stroll in these if one's patient (8,7)
12 The doctor's rejected it, miss (4)
13 Express disapproval of first person in and reduce in price (10)
17 Monkey with tail bites youth leader after brutal behaviour (10)
18 Advantage of turning outside broadcast on (4)
20 Change is needed in this place of entertainment (9,6)
23 Dislikes dead tsetse flies (7)
24 Quietly sit back in club provided by church member (7)
25 Game you need a spanner for? (6)
26 Mission operated in East Street (6)

Down

2 Has way onto vessel in difficulties (9)
3 Nurse in charge admits said sea is picturesque (6)
4 Matchless iron plane is broken (9)
5 Stick with Capone without shouting (5)
6 Blame the fish salesman for going ahead (8)
7 Girl embracing students is not five, even! (5)
8 They provided educational establishment for tutor to get on with (6,5)
10 Nice MD's rent adjustment shows keen judgment (11)
14 Can be turned from a duty list to any list (9)
15 Love helping after a party (9)
16 Theologian is to relax inside, being unwell (8)
19 Appropriate support given by mounted soldiers (6)
21 A topless golf club, say! (5)
22 Found in custard when suet pudding's to follow (5)

Last week's solution

Rugby Union

England face threat of exile

David Plummer

THE prospect of England being expelled from the Five Nations' Championship has become more real than fanciful after the Rugby Football Union decided to break with tradition and negotiate its own television rights. The state of disunion between the RFU and its Welsh, Scottish and Irish counterparts was confirmed even before their crisis meeting in Dublin last weekend.

Wales, Scotland and Ireland wanted England to sign a 10-year pact that would guarantee the four an equal share of the championship's television contract, which has 12 months to run. But on the eve of the meeting it was announced that the RFU would go its own way from next year.

England are calling the others' bluff. Wales, Scotland and Ireland, with the ostensible backing of France, had agreed that, if the RFU held out for a majority share, they would all stop playing England and invite Italy into the championship.

That was agreed by the Welsh Rugby Union earlier this month despite an offer from the RFU to embrace Wales in Sky's £150 million offer. The WRU refused because it would leave Ireland and Scotland with virtually nothing.

"Our view is that the game is best served by the four unions negotiating together and sharing the money," said the WRU chairman, Vernon Pugh. "One country going off to do its own thing sounds fine but it then becomes a hostage to its own results. How much would England have been worth 10 years ago?"

That argument has found little favour with the RFU, which maintains that, as it attracts 70 per cent of the television audience, it should have a proportionate amount of money. The RFU also points out that, if the overall value of the television deal rises from the current £27 million to the estimated £200 million if Sky becomes involved, the other three unions will be better off sharing 40 per cent between them than they are as things stand.

The Guardian Weekly
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The Washington Post · Le Monde

Italy turns the tables on history

John Hooper in Rome

THE Italian left was preparing itself for its first real taste of power after an historic victory in Sunday's general election.

Final results showed the Olive Tree alliance of former Communists, the Socialists, progressive Christian Democrats, and Greens gaining control of the senate, but *enjoying a clear majority in the* lower house of parliament only with help from hardline Marxists.

The Freedom Alliance, led by the television tycoon Silvio Berlusconi, won only 246 seats in the Chamber of Deputies to the Olive Tree alliance's 284 and Communist Refoundation's 35. With only 59 seats, Umberto Bossi's Northern League lost its grip on the balance of power.

Share values soared by almost 5 per cent on the Milan stock exchange as investors saw a chance for stable government by a respected economist.

The centre-left's candidate for prime minister is Romano Prodi, a Bologna university professor and former chairman of the state holding company, IRI. Mr Prodi said his first steps as prime minister would include cutting interests rates and rejoining the European Union's exchange rate mechanism.

Asked if Italy might be in for a period of austerity, Mr Prodi said: "If seriousness is called austerity, yes."

The defeated leader of the right, Mr Berlusconi, dismissed speculation that he might leave politics. The media magnate, who is being tried for corruption, said his Freedom Alliance, which includes free-marketeers, former neo-fascists and ex-Christian Democrats, was "important for keeping Italy within the bounds of a true democracy".

In an attempt to smooth tense relations with Mr Berlusconi, Mr Prodi offered the opposition the presidency of one of the two houses of parliament — a key institutional position.

Massimo D'Alema, leader of the PDS, the largest group within the Olive Tree alliance, also made overtures to the federalist Northern League, which won more than 10 *per cent of the vote.*

The Olive Tree alliance will need the support of the orthodox Marxists of Communist Refoundation, whose leader, Fausto Bertinotti, promised to "help give birth" to a centre-left administration.

If half a century is history, then the outcome of Italy's general election deserves to be called historic.

It is not much of an exaggeration to say that from the end of the second world war until the end of the cold war, politics in Italy was about one thing: how to keep the western world's most powerful communist party out of government. It was the abiding concern not only of the Christian Democrats, who dominated political life, but also of their patrons, in the Vatican and the White House.

Parties of the secular left which, in the normal course of events, would have competed tooth and nail with the Christian Democrats were cajoled into joining them in coalition in exchange for a share in the spoils of power. That it should have taken *so long for Italians to opt for the left* is a tribute to the depth of anti-communist sentiment which built up in the post-war years.

In order to get the PDS into power, Mr D'Alema allied with a progressively broader swathe of politicians to the PDS's right.

There is, indeed, a touch of irony about the result. Italians voted for change. But in doing so they opted for a recast version of the past.

In the lower house of parliament, the Olive Tree alliance will be unable to command a majority without the Communist Refoundation.

One of the right's wittier candidates dubbed the prospective alliance between the centre-left and Communist Refoundation a "Russian salad". "We shall be very interested to see this heterogeneous coalition put to the test," he said.

But there is now hope that this immensely dynamic, but chaotic, nation can at last achieve the sort of political stability it needs to safeguard its economic achievements.

Romano Prodi savours victory on Monday PHOTOGRAPH: BRUNO MOSCONI

Assad ups price of Lebanon ceasefire

David Hirst in Beirut and Derek Brown in Jerusalem

HOPE of an imminent ceasefire between Israel and Hizbullah all but vanished early this week as President Hafez al-Assad of Syria exploited the central role he has secured for himself in diplomatic efforts to find a solution.

The signs are that President Assad intends to make Israel and the United States pay as dearly as possible for what he sees as jointly planned aggression in Lebanon that has gone seriously wrong.

The Syrian press stepped up its anti-American propaganda on Monday, even as the US secretary of state, Warren Christopher, met Mr Assad for a second time on his shuttle mission between Damascus and Jerusalem.

"Washington is to blame for the bloodbath committed by its strategic ally in Lebanon," the Syrian Times said. "Those who fail to condemn the Israeli crime at Qana are not honest or serious in their peace efforts," added Tishreen, referring to Israel's shelling of a refugee camp in southern Lebanon last *week in which more than 100 civilians died.*

In the face of this onslaught, the US negotiating team were very cautious about their prospects on Monday. "We think we have a chance of putting a deal together this week," the state department spokesman, Nicholas Burns, said in Damascus, "but that is not assured."

With so much uncertainty surrounding the diplomacy, the Israeli prime minister, Shimon Peres, told parliament there was no deadline to the military operation.

"Grapes of Wrath is an operation that is not limited in time but is detailed in its goals. The goal is to bring long-term quiet to northern [Israeli] communities," he said.

He went on to accuse Iran of using the Hizbullah guerrilla movement in Lebanon to sabotage the Middle East peace process.

For the first time in the two-week campaign Israeli warplanes struck repeatedly at positions of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine — General Command, a pro-Syrian "rejectionist" group, at Naame, a few miles south of Beirut. An Israeli source said the group had supplied hundreds of missiles to its Hizbullah allies.

Israeli naval artillery this week continued to shell the coastal highway between Beirut and Sidon, and Hizbullah launched more Katyusha salvoes on northern Israel.

The Israeli proposals which Mr Christopher took to Damascus have not been officially disclosed, but they evidently include Mr Peres's offer of an immediate truce, to be followed, in due course, by a formal written agreement. Syria and Lebanon are reported to have quickly dismissed the offer as a trap.

According to American officials, the US wants a written version of the understandings that ended the last big flare-up in July 1993. But as the Syrians and the Lebanese see it, this version actually amounts to a fundamental revision of the understandings, since Hizbullah would be barred from retaliating with Katyusha salvoes on northern Israel against Israeli attacks on Lebanese civilians. Furthermore, the fragility of a mere truce would create such a climate of uncertainty that the 400,000 refugees who have fled their towns and villages would be afraid to return.

At the start of the campaign, Israel made it clear that it expected Syria to ratify, and help enforce, its expected outcome — the neutralisation of Hizbullah. Mr Assad is more than willing to ratify the outcome, provided it is he, more than they, who dictates what it will be.

How to lose friends, page 4
Comment, page 12

Britain joins call for global land-mine ban

BRITAIN is to campaign for a global ban on anti-personnel mines and will destroy almost half its stockpile immediately, the Government announced on Tuesday, *writes Charles Miller of the Press Association.*

The Foreign Office minister, David Davis, outlining the UK government's dramatic policy U-turn, said Britain would give up the remaining mines once an international ban is agreed. The Government's decision to reverse its policy brings Britain into line with the majority of its military partners.

The British army has tens of thousands of anti-personnel mines in stock, although it has not produced any since the early 1980s. Britain has long maintained that anti-personnel mines are a legitimate weapon when used discriminately as a means of holding up enemy forces.

Yet several Nato allies, including Belgium, Holland, Norway and, most recently, Germany have renounced them. The Pentagon is also reviewing its policy, spurred on by the danger facing US troops in the Balkans, where up to 6 million mines are thought to have been laid.

Mr Davis told BBC Radio 4's Today programme: "We have been campaigning actively in the last few years to try to get an acceptance that the only sort of mine that should be used was a self-destructing one that doesn't sit around for ever and kill civilians long after its use.

"That is still an interim aim. We are saying now that we will go beyond that. We will now campaign towards a total worldwide ban on anti-personnel mines." Britain does not believe that a total ban can achieved in the Geneva talks, scheduled to end May 3.

Washington Post, page 16

Austria	AS30	Malta	45c
Belgium	BF75	Netherlands	G 4.75
Denmark	DK16	Norway	NK 16
Finland	FM 10	Portugal	E300
France	FF 13	Saudi Arabia	SR 6.50
Germany	DM 4	Spain	P 300
Greece	DR 400	Sweden	SK 19
Italy	L 3,000	Switzerland	SF 3.30

Key ingredients for peace in Middle East

SINCE ISRAEL'S traumatic Lebanese venture (1982-85), we have occupied southern areas of Lebanon in order to prevent Katyusha rocket attacks against northern Israel. Although never successful, there might have been some justification for this occupation when all the militias were armed and no central authority existed. Since the national pact of 1991 in Lebanon establishing a national government (under Syrian control), all militia forces except (Iranian-backed) Hizbullah have been disbanded. The Lebanese government has often stated that it would disband Hizbullah if Israel left its self-proclaimed security zone.

Israeli-Lebanese negotiations (since the Madrid conference in 1991) have been totally dependent on progress on the Israeli-Syrian track as Lebanon has not been able or willing to pursue independent negotiations. While Israel's aim of a separate peace and normalisation of relations with Lebanon is unattainable at present, a peace treaty with Lebanon which postpones normalisation until a comprehensive peace with Syria is achieved may be possible.

A peace package which will meet most of the present objectives of Syria, Lebanon and Israel (but not Iran) has the following components:

❑ Israel's withdrawal from all Lebanese territory (eg, to the international border);
❑ The Lebanese government's disbanding of the Hizbullah militia and the Lebanese army resuming control of the entire country;
❑ A peace treaty between Israel and Lebanon ending the state of war between them and having provisions for full normalisation when a full Syrian-Israeli peace is achieved;
❑ International guarantees (including those from Syria) for maintaining peace along the border with an implied suspension of the treaty in case of Hizbullah (or other) attacks on Israeli targets;
❑ A Lebanese amnesty for the South Lebanese Army (SLA) (but not necessarily its incorporation into Lebanon's official army) with Israel providing compensation to the members of the SLA;
❑ Syria's pre-eminent role in Lebanese affairs to be recognised.

(Dr) Simcha Bahiri,
Tel Aviv, Israel

ISRAELI propaganda draws a distinction between the civilian residents of southern Lebanon and the "terrorist" Hizbullah, with its benign warnings to those unfortunate citizens in the way of Operation Grapes of Wrath. However, the reality of the characteristically disproportionate collective punishment issued by the Israel Defence Force (IDF) does no such thing.

It is of some comfort that, for the most part, the Western media has not automatically gone along with the official Israeli line. The damage on the ground in terms of property and people has been reported in detail in a way that was not always possible during the Gulf war.

However, British television reporting has not been entirely immune to Israeli news management. Dramatic black-and-white shots of surgical strikes, helpfully supplied by the IDF, will always make for good viewing, as will pictures of distressed civilians in bomb shelters.

Shimon Peres owes a vote of thanks to those responsible for the Katyusha attacks on northern settlements. He can now wage a displaced war on Hamas via the Hizbullah in Lebanon. Although it may well be in the interest of most of us to support Peres in his domestic campaign given the Likud alternative, it's discouraging again to witness some British television news organisations being used in this way.

Tony Fulton,
London

IT IS, of course, tragic that 400,000 people are fleeing from their homes in southern Lebanon, as Israeli warplanes step up their now daily attacks.

It is equally tragic that over a week ago, all women and children, two-thirds of the local population, were evacuated from their homes in northern Israel, in fear of the Hizbullah Katyusha missiles.

Although the scale of refugees is not equivalent, I fail to see how this was unworthy of news coverage. For the last couple of months, Katyushas have continually fired on the towns in northern Israel, and hardly a word has been reported in the British press.

The Lebanese and Syrian governments cannot disclaim all responsibility for the Hizbullah, and at the same time fail to condemn a single attack from their own territory.

Ann Fine,
London

Culling time for UK cattle

THERE IS no laboratory test that can decide if a young living animal is afflicted with the agent causing BSE (How the truth was butchered, March 31). The diagnosis can only be made by observing the animal. Should signs lead to a diagnosis of BSE in the older animal, it seems reasonable to assume that the animal has been carrying the agent all the time, in light of the latent period.

As in some human diseases, the greatest concentration of the agent appears in the nervous system. The agent, be it prion or virus, is ingested and subsequently transmitted from the intestines to the nervous system, brain, spinal cord and nerves. There appear to be only three routes of transmission: blood stream, lymphatic system and perineural channels.

Muscle masses (ie, meat) are liberally supplied with all these systems. It is suggested that it is safe to eat the meat from a young animal, but is it? The agent is in transit across the muscle masses.

As there is no therapeutic means of combating the BSE agent, there remains only one method of eradication: totally removing the vector — incinerating all cattle. The risk of contracting CJD may statistically be 0.001 per cent, but to the patient it is 100 per cent.

(Dr) E G Rees Jones,
Manchester

INFECTED cattle must be slaughtered because they are infected. Cattle from the same farms should probably also be slaughtered as a precaution. But only the extermination of the entire British beef and dairy herds will now satisfy the political agenda of mainland Europe.

Am I the only person outside Britain who finds the idea of slaughtering and incinerating millions of healthy animals to this end to be morally repugnant? And am I the only one to despair that a civilised nation should even consider it?

(Prof) John C Tipper,
Freiburg, Germany

Giving aid to the women of Herat

PAMELA COLLETT'S letter (Herat a no-go area for women, March 31) gives an accurate account of the severe and damaging constraints placed upon women by Taliban rule in Herat. Christian Aid's work in the region aims to overcome some of the constraints the Taliban impose.

Christian Aid does not rely on the operational approach of many aid agencies. It aims to support — as equal partners — local people working with poor communities. In Herat these partners, and the poor communities they represent, cannot simply pack up and leave because of occupation by a new army and administration.

They want Christian Aid to stand by them through these difficult times. We intend to do so, standing by our principle of working with the poorest, not least women.

Recently we approved grants totalling over £140,000 for projects with women as the main or sole beneficiaries and participants. As a result Christian Aid will be doing its utmost over the next three years to support Afghan village women as they work to address mental health problems. We shall also be providing loans to women returning from Iran to remote areas.

As a non-governmental agency, Christian Aid is not working for any political administration. We are working with the people. They have not left Herat, and until such time as we can do nothing to support their efforts — including women's efforts — neither shall we.

Dave Hampson,
Senior Programme Officer,
Christian Aid, London

Christ's teaching lost on rebels

YOUR CAPTION to the photograph on page 3 (April 7) makes a grave error in describing Joseph Kony's so-called "Lord's Resistance Army" as a Christian fundamentalist rebel movement. Rebels they may be, but Christians they cannot be called. Christians were so-called in the first century AD — named after Jesus Christ whom they followed.

Jesus only once witnessed one of his followers wielding a weapon against an enemy, and he rebuked that disciple (Peter). He taught people to love their enemies and do good to them. In doing so, they might well win them over.

As a surgeon I have personally witnessed what Joseph Kony's army does to innocent civilians. Two remain burned in my memory. One is a young boy with both legs blown off above the knee, and the other a young woman shot not once but repeatedly in the back. She died slowly and painfully of grievous internal injuries despite the efforts of Christian doctors to save her life.

This kind of activity does not deserve to be linked with the name of Christ.

Peter Betwes,
Consultant surgeon,
Kampala, Uganda

Briefly

PETER LENNON'S report, "The sisters of evil" (March 31), alleging cruelty by a sister and her staff toward children in their care in a Dublin orphanage, went too far. Like you, I decry the abuse of children anywhere, but it is not fair to hit an old lady when she's down and unlikely to sue.

Many people across the world have friends, relatives, neighbours, teachers, nurses, doctors and social workers who are sisters of mercy. Nearly all of them are very good people. By insulting them as "Ireland's evil sisters of mercy" you insult us, too, for we hold them in high regard for their dedicated work.

Kevin O' Rourke,
Alexandria, Egypt

SO THE Baltic states are "bouncing back", according to the headline on Lee Hockstader's article (Washington Post, April 14). Ahead maybe, but not back.

The Baltic states were fascist dictatorships during their brief period of independence between the wars. Estonians boast that they were just as prosperous as Finland then, which is true only because Finland was the only country in Western Europe or Scandiniavia as poor as Estonia. Estonia's death camps made the country "the first Jew-free region of Europe".

And for what it's worth, the Molotov-Ribbentrop non-aggression treaty which assigned the Baltic states to the Soviet sphere of influence was preceded by a non-aggression treaty between the Nazis, and Estonia and Latvia.

Jude Carlson,
Winnepeg, Manitoba, Canada

CLARE SHORT may not have been confined to a Siberian power station, but she has been silenced just as draconianly for the merest mention of an Old Labour point of view on taxation (The Week in Britain, April 21).

This episode raises again the question: what will the Blairite faction do in office if they succeed in being elected on a platform of Majorism minus Major?

Where are the concrete policies that would give muscle to the vague stakeholding aspirations that still occasionally get a mention amid New Labour's rhetoric extolling entrepreneurship, the minimum state and obeisance to the global economy?

J Wilfred Attenborough,
Lincoln

IS NOT the underlying dilemma of the British government regarding a unified European currency the *de facto* disappearance of the pound from the columns of the Guardian Weekly in favour of US dollars when reporting British financial news?

Kenneth Ryder,
Feldkirchen, Germany

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Letters to the Editor and other editorial correspondence to: The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ.
Fax: 44-171-242-0985 (UK: 0171-242 0985)
e-mail: weekly@guardian.co.uk

War? What war? demands Yeltsin

David Hearst in Moscow

IN DOUBLESPEAK worthy of his Soviet predecessors, President Boris Yeltsin declared at the weekend that there had been no Russian military operations in Chechenia for three weeks, and that the situation there was "not bad".

As Interfax news agency quoted a senior Russian commander reporting clashes in five Chechen villages, Mr Yeltsin said baldly: "No military operations have been carried out since March 31," referring to the date of his peace plan, although some rebel bands were "still running around".

President Clinton, asked why Moscow was not being pressed harder by the West on the suffering endured by Chechenia's civilian population, replied by endorsing Mr Yeltsin's line that the region is part of Russia — but said that Moscow should seek a peaceful settlement.

"The US has taken the position that Chechenia is a part of Russia," Mr Clinton told a news conference after almost five hours of talks with the Russian president. "But in the end a free country has to have free association, so there has to be something beyond fighting. There has to be a diplomatic solution."

Since Mr Yeltsin first tried to implement his ceasefire, scores of Chechen villages have been bombed and surrounded by Russian forces, and more than 120 federal troops have died in fighting.

The two presidents met after the nuclear summit of leaders of the group of seven main industrial countries and Russia decided on a largely pre-prepared package of proposals on nuclear co-operation and storage, and joint measures against nuclear theft.

Both men attempted to laugh off the abiding impression of the weekend's events — that the whole international show had been arranged to show support for Mr Yeltsin in the forthcoming presidential election.

Mr Clinton avoided open endorsement of Mr Yeltsin, but referring to the communist leader, Gennady Zyuganov, said: "I don't think we should be under any illusions that people run for offices on platforms that they intend to implement, and therefore all elections involve choices and have consequences." The relationship between Washington and Moscow would be defined by the poll, he said.

Praising the Yeltsin government's economic reforms, he said they were bearing fruit after very difficult years: "Real progress is being made."

The two presidents revealed progress on two technical arms control issues which had been complicating their relationship. Mr Yeltsin said the US was in favour of Russia readjusting its quotas of troops, tanks and armoured personnel carriers allowed in border regions under the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty. Progress has also been made on an American demand to define missile systems which are not covered by the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, and strategic rockets which are.

But no substantial progress was made on Nato's eastwards expansion. Mr Clinton reiterated that accepting former Soviet bloc states as members did not represent a threat to Russia. Mr Yeltsin, however, said Mr Clinton had pledged to use his influence to ensure expansion was not speeded up.

He said: "I think a two-way agreement might be worked out. In our view, it might include a provision that no country may be accepted [for Nato membership] without Russia's agreement."

Comment, page 12

Sarajevo set to build on peace hopes

Julian Borger reports on the architectural debate raging in the battered Bosnian capital

WHILE the broken glass and rubble are being cleared from Sarajevo's streets, architects are tentatively sketching plans for the battered capital, in the hope of recapturing some of its pre-war charm and taking advantage of its disrepair to do away with the concrete legacy of socialism.

Despite widespread doubts about how long the peace will last, there is increasing pressure to rebuild quickly as soldiers return from the front. The streets and cafés are full of demobilised fighters looking for jobs and homes.

Meanwhile, foreign donors are flying in with proposals for cheap building estates and the sort of grandiose projects which were once the hallmark of former Yugoslavia's communist rulers.

"Sometimes money doesn't bring beauty and heritage. Sometimes money brings bad architects," Said Jamakovic, head of urban planning in the city council, said.

Aida Mandic-Kalauzovic's architectural firm is under pressure from Spanish donors to help design a new Olympic-size sports centre in one of the western suburbs. "We are trying to fight them, and argue that it is better to rebuild flats and a medical centre first," she said.

Mrs Mandic-Kalauzovic and a group of her colleagues meet every Friday to discuss Sarajevo's architectural future. It is the continuation of a debate that lasted throughout the war. They called it the art of "warchitecture".

Now the architects' association is preparing for the first international workshop on "post-warchitecture", in Munich next month.

A man begins repairs on his house in a once front-line suburb in Sarajevo PHOTOGRAPH: DANILO KRSTANOVIC

Some of the city's problems are urgent. For example, almost all Sarajevo's trees were chopped down for firewood. On the northern hills, deforestation, along with the lack of drains, threatens to cause a mudslide which could destroy thousands of shacks and houses built without planning permission in the last years of communism.

The city council is carrying out an emergency tree-planting programme to strengthen Sarajevo's northern flank.

But there is also a far-reaching debate on how the city might break free of the twin legacies of war and dictatorship. Many in the architects' association believe the city should draw lessons from its pre-socialist past. They say the war has taught them to rely on communities rather than technology.

"The people who lived in the big skyscrapers had great problems during the war. The lifts broke and the water pumps stopped working. There were no chimneys for fires and no storerooms for wood," Mr Jamakovic said.

The concrete housing estates in the west of the city were reduced to squalor by the war. The open spaces between the tower blocks of New Sarajevo became a dangerous wasteland, with no shelter from the elements or mortars.

At the narrow eastern end of a tapering valley, the city's Ottoman heart of 16th century mosques, narrow streets and low, tiled houses proved remarkably resilient. Mr Jamakovic attributes this to the old Turkish building style, in which districts, or *mahalas*, were built around small courtyards and fountains.

Residents of the old quarter fetched food and water for each other and put out their neighbours' fires. Partly as a result, the survival rate was significantly higher than in the suburbs.

Jean-François Daoulas, a French urban planner working in Sarajevo for the United Nations, believes the *mahala* can be reproduced, by building groups of low houses, offices, parks and sports facilities between the concrete "cliffs and canyons".

"There is an opportunity to do something now. Sarajevans can rebuild their urban culture," Mr Daoulas said.

When construction begins in earnest it is likely to bear the mark of "warchitecture". Most architects say it will be impossible to shrug off their siege mentality and the fear that hostilities might start again at any time.

"Before the war, we used to build houses with very big windows facing the mountains, where the shells came from," Mr Jamakovic said.

"Now we will make our windows smaller, and put them on the other side of the house."

US-Japan relations 'improving'

Kevin Rafferty in Tokyo

PRESIDENT Clinton last week expressed satisfaction that trade relations between the United States and Japan were on a better footing.

To underline the president's point at the end of his visit to Japan, the ministry of finance in Tokyo released figures showing that for the first time since 1992 the country's annual trade surplus fell below $100 billion.

Equally important for relations with Washington, Japan's surplus with the US shrank for the first time in five years, falling 27.1 per cent to $40.6 billion. China now has a bigger surplus with the US.

The only surprise was that Japan's imports fell last month by 1.3 per cent, the first fall for more than three years. Economists said this was just a blip.

The surplus last month continued to fall, thanks to a still greater decline in exports. A stronger dollar and weaker yen makes Japan's exports more competitive.

A significant part of the fall in exports and increase in imports has come from "transplant" car sales, from Japanese factories abroad. Car imports have increased rapidly, but two of the popular "foreign" brands are Honda and Toyota.

Before he flew from Tokyo to St Petersburg, Mr Clinton told parliament that trade relationships between the two countries were "not free of friction". He added: "But after years of frustration on both sides, for the first time we have established a way to work through and resolve our differences."

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Baby-selling investigated

GREECE has launched an official inquiry into illegal adoptions, amid reports that thousands of toddlers were sold to families at home and abroad in the 30 years after the second world war, *writes Helena Smith in Athens.*

The Socialist government ordered the investigation under mounting pressure from victims of the alleged baby-selling scheme. Since the scandal erupted last year, many Greeks, especially in the United States, have begun to seek their real identities. Many of them have discovered their roots via the Internet.

"We have all the evidence in the world to prove that this illicit practice took place," said Marianna Faithfull, who helped set up the Association for the Search for Children Adopted Without the Consent of their Natural Parents.

"We want the government to recognise this in writing and to finally amend Greece's antiquated adoption laws. Otherwise, we will take our case to the European Court of Human Rights."

The victims say they were parted from their families after being falsely declared dead a few days after they were born. Most had been handed over to institutions on a temporary basis by impoverished parents.

Gunmen kill 18 at Cairo tourist hotel

Guardian Reporters

GUNMEN shot dead 17 mostly elderly Greek tourists and an Egyptian parking attendant at a Cairo hotel last week. Fourteen other tourists and an Egyptian parking attendant were wounded, three critically, in the attack, responsibility for which was later claimed by the terrorist Islamic Group.

The Greek tourists were on an Easter visit of the Holy Land sites and had arrived from Jerusalem. They were about to board a bus to Alexandria, a seat of the Greek Orthodox Church, when the massacre began.

According to witnesses, four men drew up in a white van, stepped out and fired on the party as they stood outside the foyer of the Europa Hotel on the road to the pyramids.

"I heard bubububum, four shots in the first burst, then it started again, a longer burst, and I saw women falling like flies, covered in blood," said Sotirios Grykis, a Greek tourist who saw the scene from a first-floor balcony.

There was speculation that the shooting might be linked to the Israeli offensive in Lebanon, for which Hizbullah, or Party of God, has vowed revenge. The group of middle-aged and elderly Greek visitors, said photographer Essam Said, 30, "looked like Israelis, so maybe these people thought they were Jews."

"I believe the operation is connected to Lebanon because the Europa Hotel is known for accepting Israeli tourists," said Majdi Hussein, editor of the Islamic opposition newspaper Shaab. "The timing seems to make this the logical conclusion. Also, according to my information, these Greek tourists had come originally from Israel and hence the mistake."

However, Yasser Shetta, assistant marketing manager at the Europa disputed these claims: "Anybody could tell they were not Jewish."

Threat to peace talks

PALESTINIAN officials said on Monday that Israel was threatening to halt peace moves if leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organisation replaced the PLO's 1964 charter, which calls for Israel's destruction, with a declaration of independence.

President Yasser Arafat began a meeting of his Palestine National Council by saying: "I call upon your council to amend all the articles in the national charter which contradict the peace of the brave that we signed." His peace deals with Israel require the council to remove by May 7 the clauses about destroying the Jewish state.

But officials said Mr Arafat believed he could win council support for removing the clauses only by having it scrap the charter and substitute its 1988 declaration of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.

They said Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres, facing a tough election campaign, opposed this as a violation of the 1993 peace deal that put off the issue of Palestinian statehood until later negotiations. — *Reuter*



The body of a child is carried from a block of flats destroyed by Israeli warplanes in Nabatiyeh last week, a foretaste of the carnage to follow at the UN compound at Qana, where more than 100 people, mostly women and children, were killed by Israeli shelling
PHOTOGRAPH: MOHAMED ZATARI

Killing people loses friends

Until the Qana massacre Israel had the tacit support of the West for its Lebanese adventure. No longer, writes **Ian Black**

"IF YOU think you understand Lebanon you haven't been properly briefed," cautions a jokey poster in the headquarters of Unifil, the UN force whose base at Qana became a charnel house of decapitated babies, severed limbs and charred corpses after last week's Israeli artillery attack.

Yet there is nothing incomprehensible about the strictly military logic of what happened in those frenzied minutes of shelling: Israeli gunners were simply firing back, with devastating inaccuracy, after Hizbullah guerrillas loosed off another salvo of Katyusha rockets a few hundred metres away.

Nor is there any reason to disbelieve the laconic explanation by the Israeli chief of staff, General Amnon Shahak: "We fought Hizbullah . . . and when they fire on us, we will fire at them to defend ourselves."

He added: "I don't know of any other rules of the game, either for the army or for civilians."

Before the massacre, arguments about Israel's offensive focused on the question of proportion: was it right to use air strikes and artillery barrages against Hizbullah's Katyusha rockets — primitive weapons that have killed 12 Israelis since 1982 but none in recent months? And was it justified to terrorise 400,000 Lebanese into leaving their homes because of the actions of a handful of guerrillas who enjoy at least passive popular support because — their broader fundamentalist ideology apart — they are fighting to liberate their country from foreign occupation?

Israeli attacks on power stations provided a sinister hint that Lebanon's economic recovery after years of civil war would not be allowed to take place if there was no peace in Galilee. By the rules of this dangerous game, a disaster was always possible.

Yet until those shells ploughed into the Qana base, world reaction had been strikingly low-key: the United States tacitly supported the onslaught while elsewhere Israel enjoyed novel understanding of its right to self-defence; even Arab responses were muted.

It is hard to exaggerate the significance of such supportive noises. Since the agreement between Israel and the PLO in September 1993, the Jewish state has broken out of its isolation and re-established ties that many countries severed in 1967 or 1973.

Before that, coinciding with the end of the cold war, the ideological sting of a century of confrontation was drawn as Zionism and the dispossession and discrimination it represented for Palestinians became less burning issues than ever before.

Post-modern Israel worried more about markets than territory as its soldiers tired of intifada duty in the alleys of Nablus. Palestinians were emboldened by their successful challenge to the status quo, came to terms with their history and grudgingly accepted that half (or even less) a loaf was better than none. Arabs elsewhere recognised their societies faced even tougher problems than Israel.

And as Israel opened new embassies and old lobbyists abandoned propaganda for trade promotion, wide support for the peace process strengthened the feeling that the world really had changed, that the old conflict was winding down, that there was after all, going to be a happy end.

Last November's assassination of Yitzhak Rabin by a rightwing Jew gave peace a martyr while Islamist suicide bombers and dismembered bodies in the shopping malls of Tel Aviv raised the stakes higher. Even Yasser Arafat emerged, demonised, and embraced a tacky democracy designed to legitimise — and hopefully develop — the self-rule deal with Israel.

As the tectonic plates shifted, Shimon Peres's vision of a "new" Middle East shimmered: the Arab economic boycott faded, secret friendships with Morocco and Jordan came out of the closet and there were public forays to the Gulf. Last month's "anti-terrorist" summit in Egypt brought Israel and pro-peace process Arabs into a new coalition.

Last week's abrupt cancellation of a follow-up meeting in Luxembourg symbolised how damaging the attacks have been.

Yet just as the Sarajevo market massacre galvanised the international community into belated action over Bosnia, Qana may encourage countries which matter, and care, to co-operate more closely. The US and France were urgently coordinating an approach to a ceasefire before the mass killing.

But medium-term efforts must focus on fitting the crucial missing pieces into the jigsaw of a comprehensive settlement: Syria's President Hafez al-Assad remains the key regional player, exploiting Lebanon's wild south as his last and only card in the long endgame over the Golan Heights — now almost certainly attainable if Mr Peres's Labour government survives next month's election.

Credible reports of weapons being airlifted from Iran to Damascus and sent on to the south three weeks ago are more than an incidental detail in a drama that was cynical and complex enough before it took this terrible toll of innocents.

Western countries also need to think harder about how to handle Iran. Tehran has openly supported Hizbullah and remains ideologically opposed to the wider peace process. Iran is looking back, but others need to look ahead.

An unequivocal promise of withdrawal could coax Syria to rein in Hizbullah and the government in Beirut to take over its own backyard. The phrase "no territorial ambitions" echoes hollowly in the history of this century, but it is true — for Mr Peres at least — and it should be spelled out.

And Israel needs to remember what many thought, over-optimistically, it had already learned: that there are limits to force and a heavy price to be paid — in international opprobrium and willing generations of future martyrs — for depending on it too much.

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The Week

AN independent investigation will be conducted into accusations that Australian diplomats used aid money to buy sex with children in Asian orphanages.

A JURY in Los Angeles spared Erik and Lyle Menendez from the death penalty and recommended that they be sentenced to life in prison without parole for killing their parents.

SCORES of officers, including generals, have been retired in the second large shake-up of the Nigerian army since General Sani Abacha took power in 1993.

COLOMBIA has adopted emergency security measures to counter the threat of attacks by leftwing guerrillas fighting to topple President Ernesto Samper.

CONVICTED British killer John Martin Scripps was hanged in Singapore for the murder of a South African tourist, Gerard George Lowe.

A BOMB blast in a backpackers' hostel in New Delhi, killed at least 17 people including two Britons, Crinan Wilde and Jane Kirby. Her boyfriend, Viscount Weymouth, the 21-year-old son of the Marquess of Bath, was injured.

A NEW ZEALAND general election, the first under a proportional representation-style voting system, is likely to be held in mid-October after the resignation of First MP Michael Laws over a political scandal.

FORMER Australian Labor prime minister Paul Keating has quit politics. His government suffered a landslide defeat in March, ending 13 years of Labor rule.

PRESIDENT Fernando Cardoso is to find ways of speeding up Brazil's land reform after a massacre of 19 landless farmers by police.

A US delegation arrived in Liberia to aid efforts to bring a lasting peace after two weeks of fighting. Residents are returning while health workers battle to contain outbreaks of a disease thought to be cholera.

TAMIL Tiger guerrillas overran a police post in northeastern Sri Lanka, killing at least seven policemen and wounding 15.

ROBERT Hersant, France's most powerful press baron, has died aged 76.

THE former South African labour leader, Cyril Ramaphosa, has left politics to go into business after he failed to gain the position of finance minister.

Indonesians jealous of East Timor handouts

John Aglionby in Jakarta

EAST TIMOR is beginning to give the Indonesian government headaches of a different kind, as accusations grow of government favouritism towards the troubled province.

Taxpayers are complaining that a disproportionally large amount of public money is being used to woo people away from support for separatist unrest in the former Portuguese colony, while more loyal areas are being neglected. Most provinces rely on central government for up to 70 per cent of their budgets.

The government spends more in state aid on East Timor, per capita, than anywhere but Irian Jaya, the Indonesian half of New Guinea. In the last financial year government spending stood at nearly $100 per person in East Timor compared with $28 for East Java, $45 for Bali and just $15 for West Java. Millions of dollars have been spent on schools, hospitals, roads and housing in the province.

But many East Timorese remain deeply hostile to Indonesian rule. Dozens have sought asylum in foreign embassies in Jakarta in the past 18 months or tried to enter Australia illegally by means of the hazardous sea passage. Indonesia is obliged to maintain a garrison of 6,000 soldiers in the province.

Open opposition of this kind fuels the bitterness in other areas, where people feel their loyalty to Jakarta goes unrewarded. "Attitudes to East Timor have started to change," said one political analyst. "Instead of accepting what the government does, people are beginning to question the large amount of aid given to the province. The new feeling is: 'Why should we give money to these people when they are doing nothing but always causing trouble?' Some people are even wondering whether we should give up East Timor, as it's proving to be so expensive to govern."

"There is a jealousy emerging, particularly in eastern Indonesia," Pande Radja Silalahi, an economist, said. "The people there feel that they're giving more to Jakarta than they're receiving, and they point to East Timor as somewhere that is getting more than its fair share."

Resentment is particularly strong in East Kalimantan, an oil-rich province in Borneo which regularly generates more than 20 per cent of Indonesia's export earnings yet received less than 1 per cent of the country's $128 billion development budget last year.

"The indigenous Dayaks are witnessing their resources being depleted without, in their eyes, being adequately compensated," said Mr Silalahi. "In the past they have pointed the finger at the Javanese, but now attention is turning to the question of East Timor."

Hadi Soesastro, the executive director of the Indonesian Centre for Strategic and International Studies, believes the government is caught in a dilemma. "In Jakarta there is a basic fear that if the youngest province is treated very differently from the rest of the country it will become very different," he said. "But how can equal treatment be applied to a province which doesn't share the nation's history and is economically so far behind other provinces?"

There is little evidence, however, that government policy towards East Timor is about to change. Resentment in other provinces may, in any case, be checked by a new regional devolution programme.

Gaullists in split over immigration

Paul Webster in Paris

PARLIAMENTARY proposals to reduce illegal immigrants' access to education and health services have deepened a split inside the Gaullist-led cabinet and raised a storm of protest from human rights organisations.

Rightwing MPs have been accused of trying to compete with the racist National Front, which has stepped up its anti-immigration campaign in the run-up to the 1998 general election.

A recent opinion poll showed 33 per cent of the electorate in favour of the extremist movement's racist programme.

A parliamentary commission's proposals — handed to the prime minister, Alain Juppé, last week — reflect the tough policies of the interior minister, Jean-Louis Debré, who has presented a bill to the national assembly that makes it the equivalent of a terrorist offence to shelter an illegal immigrant.

Human rights organisations are preparing a national demonstration in June against what they consider government encouragement of intolerance towards immigrants. But Mr Juppé is among ministers opposing tighter restrictions because he fears a popular backlash against the MPs' demands, which include fingerprinting African visitors.

The parliamentary commission's chairman, Jean-Pierre Phillibert, a member of the Union for French Democracy (UDF), said MPs wanted 46 changes, including tighter frontier controls, stricter detention conditions and expulsions made easier.

The proposed laws would make it difficult for illegal immigrants to get hospital treatment, council housing and schooling, and they would no longer qualify for child allowances.

One critic of tougher laws is the former interior minister Charles Pasqua, whose 1993 anti-immigration measures have been the subject of continuous protest. He said the laws against illegal immigration were already strong enough but not being fully enforced.

Last year more than 45,000 visitors were declared illegal immigrants and ordered to leave French territory but fewer than 11,000 were eventually expelled, because of bureaucratic delays or appeals. The total number was almost the same as in 1992.

Christopher has seen the light, and it's green



The US this week

Martin Walker

THE TENTH anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster was marked in Moscow by the visit of President Clinton and other heads of the Group of Seven leading industrial nations in a special summit to deal with nuclear safety. Clinton had arrived from South Korea and Japan, on a journey that signalled just how different the world has become in the 40 months of his presidency.

Arguments over trade and imports, usually the staple of US-Japanese encounters, were put aside. Instead, all focused on the new security agenda of managing both North Korea's collapse and China's explosion into economic growth and regional power. In Russia, the G7 discussion on nuclear safety was really about managing the dreadful heritage of the old Soviet state, and the incontinence of its corrupt Russian replacement, which is leaking nuclear scientists and materials in a most alarming way.

One symbol of this worrisome new world was brandished before the hearings of a Senate committee last week. It was a copy of an advertising flyer being distributed around the Middle East by an executive recruitment firm with a Hong Kong postal box address, advertising the services of Russian weapons and nuclear scientists.

The G7 has pumped $70 million into the International Science and Technology Centre in Moscow, to find useful work and guarantee reasonable salaries for just such footloose scientists. The European Union has put another $500 million into helping improve the safety of the old Soviet nuclear power stations.

In a largely unsung initiative, the US has spent more than $1.5 billion to tame the great sprawling beast of the Soviet strategic nuclear arsenal. The enriched plutonium of Kazakhstan now glows securely from vaults in Tennessee. Ukraine's missiles are being shipped back to Russia and dismantled, thanks to Clinton's diplomacy and the funds provided in the bill which bears the names of Senators Sam Nunn and Richard Lugar.

Much danger remains. It is an open secret among governments that nuclear proliferation has already taken place. Israel is reckoned to have at least 100 nuclear warheads. India is thought to have 20, and Pakistan rather fewer, but sufficient to deter, and even North Korea is assumed to have at least one nuclear device. Iraq was horribly close, and Iran is trying hard to become a nuclear power.

The threat of nuclear terrorism is growing alarmingly, and again the US is behaving responsibly, pumping another $300 million into providing security for the Russian stockpiles. The Mayak storage facility outside Chelyabinsk, which contained 30 tons of weapons grade plutonium, was found by American inspectors to be guarded by a ring fence and a rusted padlock. It is now being upgraded, with motion detectors, electric fences, locks, numbered passes and log books. The problem is that the horse may already have bolted. Russian accounting methods were absurdly lax. There are simply no reliable records of how much weapons-grade material the Soviet nuclear industry produced.

Doubtless the US and the G7 could have done more, and the Russians continue, in their sales of nuclear technology to Iran, to be almost as criminally irresponsible as the Soviets were. But the world has responded well to this extraordinary challenge of the post-cold war world. And there was a promising sign last week that this was not simply brought on by a rush of nuclear dread.

A strange conversion has taken place in the upper reaches of the Clinton administration. Like the very finest precedent, it happened on the road to Damascus. This miracle probably took place because the road through Syria was sadly closed. There are not many silver linings to the disaster which has befallen the Middle Eastern peace process, but one of them may the conversion of US secretary of state Warren Christopher to the environmental cause.

There can be no doubt of Christopher's dogged devotion to duty. His 17 separate trips to Syria to cajole the taciturn President Assad towards a peace deal with Israel deserve some kind of international award for sheer perseverance. But there will now be no comprehensive Middle East peace deal (and no Nobel peace prize), and none of the other foreign policy achievements of the Clinton presidency are particularly linked to Christopher.

Since Christopher is widely expected to retire if Clinton wins a second term, he wanted a legacy, and may have begun to find one a month ago on his visit to Kiev, as he walked through the children's ward of a hospital that treats patients from Chernobyl. His talks in the Middle East time and again had run into the problem of limited water supplies and soaring populations. His staff review of the prospects for the central Asian republics kept stumbling over what he called "Soviet irrigation policies that turned much of the Aral Sea into an ocean of sand".



"I kept running into political or security problems that had a very large environmental content," Christopher said in a speech at Stanford university that could have been written by green activists, who have greeted the speech with a mixture of scepticism and relief.

"Haiti stuck in my mind, with the overpopulation and deforestation of that country. And in eastern Europe, those new democracies are struggling with a legacy of environmental abuse and may never fully recover . . . We must not forget the hard lessons of Rwanda, where depleted resources and swollen populations exacerbated the political and economic pressures that exploded into one of this decade's greatest tragedies," he went on.

According to his staff and speech writers, these green sentiments are wholly genuine. Christopher has got the green religion, largely because the imperative of thinking environmentally has been thrust down his throat at every turn.

"In Russia, the fate of democracy may depend on its ability to offer the Russian people better living standards and to reverse a shocking decline in life expectancy," his speech went on. "Poorly stored nuclear waste poses a threat to human life for centuries to come — one sixth of the Russian land mass remains so polluted that it is unfit even for industrial use."

For once, all this may be more than rhetoric. Christopher has ordered the State Department to produce an annual report on global environmental challenges, meant to echo the annual report on human rights. The main US embassies in each global region are to establish environmental hubs, to press natural resource issues and sustainable development. Christopher's staff, egged on by the eco-conscious Vice-President Al Gore, arranged for him to be given special scientific briefings on global warming, population growth and water resources. "The secretary really got into it," one young aide said. "He heard in one briefing that by the year 2025, there would be more people living in cities than are currently alive. He heard in another briefing, on flood potential from global warming, that 40 per cent of all cities are on coasts or tidal estuaries. He put those two together, and began diving into the reading list."

Like the National Economic Council staff in the White House, Christopher has also perceived the connection between sustainable economic growth, inflation rates, and commodity prices, all coming under strain from China's surging appetite for grain and oil imports. "With 22 per cent of the world's population, China has only 7 per cent of its fresh water and crop land, 3 per cent of its forests, and 2 per cent of its oil," Christopher noted.

Some scepticism is in order here. Al Gore used to speak like this before the last election. And Gore helped ensure the appointment of the former Colorado senator, Tim Wirth, to the new post of assistant secretary of state for global affairs, whose job was meant to stress precisely these themes. Beyond the Cairo population summit, not much was heard of Wirth's new role, and he noted bitterly that diplomacy had its own cult of macho, of which the first rule was that "real men don't do environment". But Wirth kept plugging away within the bureaucracy with the support of Gore, and the breakthrough came from two separate developments.

The first was the Chernobyl anniversary and the planning for the G7 summit on nuclear safety in Moscow. The cost estimates involved in the clean-up, and in trying to make safe the radiation archipelago of the old Soviet power stations, from Cuba to Vietnam to half of Eurasia, staggered even the White House number crunchers whose thinking starts in billions.

The second was the Middle East, where Christopher has now concluded that there will be no lasting comprehensive peace agreement until Turkey, Syria and Israel can reach a water-sharing deal.

However, before the green world hails Christopher's conversion, environmentalists are waiting to see if the first example of America's traditional geopolitical interests being made subordinate to environmental concerns. One symbol would be an attempt to impose traditional diplomatic disciplines, such as sanctions, against a notorious polluter. Another would be some form of self-denying ordinance among the world leading arms exporters, most of them in the G7, but that may be too much to hope for. One rather wan comment on Christopher's speech came from a Canadian diplomat, who noted that Canada regularly protested at American exports of pollution and the acid rain it unleashed on Canada. But Christopher did not get into that.

"Better late than never, but there has got to be more substance," Brent Blackwelder, president of Friends of the Earth, told reporters. "I'm very excited — I just hope we can make it happen," added the Sierra Club's Larry Williams.

The green lobby has been encouraged by some personnel shifts. The assignment of the environmental initiative to a new task force led by James Steinberg, the much-respected head of the State Department's policy planning staff, has gone down well. Christopher has set two top targets, for a global agreement to ban pesticides like DDT that are known to be dangerous, and for a new co-operative agreement with China to help it deal with the environmental consequences of growth.

"The United States is providing the leadership to promote global peace and prosperity. We must also lead in safeguarding the global environment on which that prosperity and peace ultimately depend," Christopher said.

"We will raise these issues on every occasion where our diplomacy may be useful," Christopher promised. "We must meet the challenge of making global environmental issues a vital part of our foreign policy. For the sake of future generations, we must succeed."

We shall see.

US stands silent to honour Oklahoma

MILLIONS of Americans stood in silence on Friday last week to mark the first anniversary of the worst terrorist episode in the country's history, *writes Jonathan Freedland.*

At 9.02 am local time thousands stood on the site of the Alfred P Murrah federal office building in Oklahoma City, destroyed by a huge homemade bomb exactly one year earlier. They remained silent for 168 seconds — one for each person killed. Then the names of the dead were called out as relatives stepped forward to place a memento on the perimeter fence that is all that remains of the bomb site. All over the country, Americans paused to watch the ceremony.

April 19 has become a day of dread in America, marking the anniversary of the ending of the FBI's stand-off with the Branch Davidian sect at Waco, Texas in which at least 80 people were killed. Prosecutors believe the Oklahoma bomb was, in part, revenge by extreme rightwingers for these deaths.

Two US army veterans, Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols, are being held for the bombing. The evidence against them is largely circumstantial, however, and fears are growing that it will prove inadequate to secure a conviction.

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Corruption fears dog Hong Kong

One of the cleanest governments in Asia fears a Chinese 'epidemic', writes **Andrew Higgins**

THE first glimpse of Hong Kong for new immigrants from China who arrive legally, instead of wading ashore at night or sneaking in by junk, is a video show at the Lo Wu border post. It features a man sitting behind bars, and stern advice on how to stay out of jail. "Hong Kong is a society ruled by law," the narrator says. "In Hong Kong, corruption is illegal."

This is Hong Kong's first line of defence against the rampant corruption across the border in China. Amid all the uncertainty created by a change of sovereignty in little more than a year, perhaps no issue is more important to Hong Kong's future than its ability to hold the line separating two systems which, according to a new survey, rank at the top and near the bottom of Asia's corruption scale. An official in Beijing responsible for fighting corruption broke down in tears of frustration on national television recently.

Tycoons may feel no disquiet about the impending demolition of Hong Kong's elected legislature, but they worry about having to make money by Beijing's rules.

Michael Leung, head of the Independent Commission Against Corruption, places his hopes in China's self-interest and the colony's memories of the corruption that turned the Royal Hong Kong Police Force into a syndicate of sleaze and greed. "Nobody wants to return to the dark old days of the 1960s," he said.

The commission was established in 1974 to clean up the mess left by a rotten police hierarchy. "What we have in Hong Kong now is a culture of clean government. There has been a quiet revolution over the last 20 years," he said. "I cannot see why China would wish to destroy that culture. That would only undermine Hong Kong's usefulness to China."

More than 13,000 lorries cross between Hong Kong and China each day, more than 1,000 Chinese companies are based in the colony, and up to 4 million Chinese work for Hong Kong businesses on the mainland. There is ample opportunity for corruption to penetrate Hong Kong. But, so far, fears of a stampede to cash in, by means fair and foul, before 1997 have proved exaggerated. The number of corruption cases did rise in the early 1990s, but has since fallen. The number of corruption reports to Mr Leung's commission was down by 10 per cent last year.

More than 90 per cent of the cases investigated by the commission are initiated by tip-offs from the public through a 24-hour hotline. Public involvement may also prevent the commission from abusing for political ends its wide powers of investigation.

But it is the link between politics and crime in China that causes most unease among businessmen. "The word corruption tends to be used in Asia, particularly in China, in times of crackdown by politicians against rival politicians and their supporters or families. It is a political weapon," said Robert Broadfoot, head of the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy. "They can define corruption any way they see fit at the time in China, whereas in Hong Kong we have specific laws."

After 1997, potential political traps are likely to proliferate with the emergence of at least three separate power centres in Hong Kong — the local government, the People's Liberation Army and the central government in Beijing. Authorities in the neighbouring Chinese province of Guangdong will also have their own agenda.

Hong Kong's business community was shaken last year when Zhou Baifang, one of the territory's leading "red capitalists", was summoned back to Beijing and arrested for "serious economic offences". But his real transgression seemed more political than criminal.

Annoyed by what they see as colonial prejudice, China's defenders in the colony say it is Hong Kong that first incubated the germs of the corruption epidemic now sweeping the mainland. "Corruption in Hong Kong was serious in the 1950s and 1960s when there was no corruption in mainland China," said Tam Yiu-chung, a pro-Beijing politician. "How can we tell who influenced whom?"

The Independent Commission Against Corruption praises the co-operation of Chinese officials, pointing to dozens of witnesses interviewed on the mainland in connection with Hong Kong cases. Mr Leung said mainland companies are among the most enthusiastic participants in a scheme, sponsored by the commission, to promote corporate ethics.

A new generation of Hong Kong residents is as worrying as any bad habits from the mainland. Mr Leung sees schools and kindergartens as the best place to prevent the resurgence of Hong Kong's proven flair for corruption.

"Young people are more tolerant of corruption. They are very relaxed about it. The China element in this is very small," he said. "They were not victims of corruption like their parents. They have no idea what it means for the family, for the individual, for their career. They have not gone through the pains of the older generation."

● A catalogue of demands for British "co-operation" has revealed China's determination to enforce its will on Hong Kong before 1997 and hobble the authority of its outgoing governor, Chris Patten. A 10-point list presented by the Beijing-appointed preparatory committee demands premises for an unelected shadow legislature, which Mr Patten has repeatedly denounced, and radio and television time before the handover. The demands, kept secret pending a formal British responce, may provoke further confrontation between London and Beijing during the countdown to the Chinese assumption of power on July 1, 1997.

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Blanket is drawn over UK poverty

David Brindle

MINISTERS are reneging on a commitment to draw up measures to tackle poverty in Britain because they say such action is needed only in Third World countries.

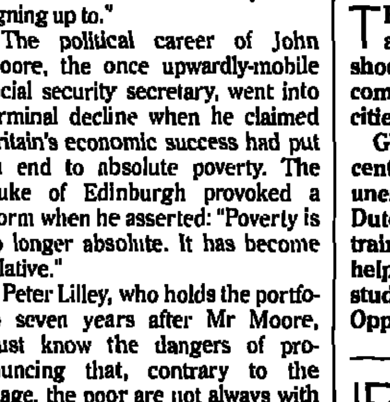
The move will inflame controversy over the extent of poverty in the UK. It will be seen as a snub to the United Nations, which has declared 1996 the international year for the eradication of poverty.

Peter Lilley, the Social Security Secretary, has told welfare campaigners that the Government will not be introducing a national poverty eradication plan as agreed by countries including Britain at last year's UN summit on social development in Copenhagen. He interprets government figures to support his contention that Britain is not poverty-stricken.

In a letter on behalf of the Prime Minister, Mr Lilley says: "It is our view that the recommendations . . . principally relate to the needs of underdeveloped countries, which need to harness their economies to achieve basic goals such as the provision of clean water and adequate food supplies. The UK [already has] the infrastructure and social protection systems to prevent poverty and maintain living standards."

A Foreign Office spokesman confirmed that John Major had replied in similar vein to Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the UN Secretary-General, who had asked what Britain was doing.

The cold shoulder to the UN emerged as a report claimed poverty is growing faster in Britain than in most of Europe. The report, published by the Child Poverty Action Group, says one in three children is growing up in poverty. In 1979, the figure was one in 10. One in four of all people is living in poverty, compared with one in seven when the Tories took office.



The Copenhagen summit, in March 1995, was attended by Whitehall officials and Lady Chalker, Minister for Overseas Development, who signed a joint declaration and programme of action on Britain's behalf. This commits countries to enact national plans to "establish . . . strategies and affordable time-bound goals and targets for the substantial reduction of overall poverty and the eradication of absolute poverty".

Mr Lilley's response has come after a coalition of 18 anti-poverty groups supporting the UN year, including Oxfam, Save the Children and the Low Pay Unit, inquired how Britain was fulfilling its commitment.

Paul Goggins, national co-ordinator of Church Action on Poverty, who chairs the anti-poverty coalition, said: "The programme requires countries to put in place a plan of poverty eradication. They must have known what they were signing up to."

The political career of John Moore, the once upwardly-mobile social security secretary, went into terminal decline when he claimed Britain's economic success had put an end to absolute poverty. The Duke of Edinburgh provoked a storm when he asserted: "Poverty is no longer absolute. It has become relative."

Peter Lilley, who holds the portfolio seven years after Mr Moore, must know the dangers of pronouncing that, contrary to the adage, the poor are not always with us. But he clearly believes it.

In his response to the inquiry from the anti-poverty coalition, Mr Lilley is only prepared to acknowledge a problem of "low income", which he links to unemployment.

Poverty: The Facts, CPAG, 1-5 Bath Street, London EC1V 9PY, £7.95

Labour agrees manifesto will be put to union ballot

Patrick Wintour

LEADERS of the big unions and the Labour leadership on Monday agreed a deal which will let the unions have a say in drawing up the party's manifesto.

The deal, which allows the unions to hold their own ballot, will help defuse the row which followed Tony Blair's decision to ballot the party's entire membership.

It was agreed at a meeting at Congress House between Mr Blair, the deputy leader John Prescott and a handful of senior union leaders.

The move to ballot the 350,000 membership would have been the first time that a key part of Labour policymaking had excluded the unions. The proposal had caused anger and anxiety with unions over Mr Blair's plans for union relations.

The agreement means that Labour's pre-election manifesto, due to be published this summer, will be put to a ballot of party and union members, probably the biggest pre-election endorsement ever sought by a Western political party.

The GMB union's general secretary, John Edmonds, was instrumental in persuading his fellow union leaders that the best response to Mr Blair's membership-only ballot move was to co-ordinate unions' ballots. It now seems all the big unions — the Transport and General Workers Union, Unison, the GMB, the Communication Workers Union and the AEEU — will hold ballots of all their political levy payers on the manifesto.

● Labour leftwingers denounced the prospect that the party's review on post-16 education might end child benefit payments to older teenagers as a recipe for "driving many more families into poverty".

Gordon Brown, Labour's treasury spokesman, made a speech at the weekend intending to signal a new approach to keeping poorer teenagers in education and extending opportunities for school dropouts via individual learning accounts.

But leftwing MPs Ken Livingstone and Diane Abbott claimed that child benefit paid to 1 million families for older teenagers makes the difference between keeping children in school or not.



'City reps', pictured here in Glasgow, may become a common sight in town centres PHOTO: MURDO MacLEOD

'Have a nice day' plan for urban regeneration

THEY are tourist guides, first-aiders and general trouble-shooters, and they will soon be common sights in Britain's cities, *writes James Meikle*.

Glasgow's uniformed "city centre reps", hired from the unemployment registers, and Dutch "city guard" schemes, training young jobless people to help visitors feel safer, are being studied by both Government and Opposition parties.

The Glasgow experiment, including EU funds for training and development, involves 28 "reps" — 16 on patrol, helping the public, greeting foreign tourists in their own language, and alerting the council or police to maintenance and security problems; and 12 "clean-up staff", removing fly-posters and graffiti and keeping signs clean.

Linda Thompson, a former shop manager, said: "I have been helping people with directions, doing first aid, reporting faults and enjoying it a lot. There's been everything — people collapsing, falling and cutting their heads, nose bleeds. We have helped calm people down. It is a good service."

Caroline Durkan, senior project executive with Glasgow Development Agency, said the day may come when staff wear sponsors' logos on uniforms.

IRA bomb dents hope

Barbie Dutter and Patrick Wintour

AN EXPLOSION ripped through an empty building in a wealthy part of south-west London last week, throwing fresh doubt on hopes that a new IRA ceasefire can be brokered in advance of all-party talks on Northern Ireland.

Occupants of the street, where houses cost millions of pounds, include diplomats and members of Arab royal families. The bomb came on the eve of the Commons second reading of the Government's bill introducing elections on May 30 to a 110-strong Northern Ireland forum, ahead of all-party talks scheduled for June 10.

Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, had hoped the clear separation of the forum from the all-party talks, coupled with a set date for talks, would meet Sinn Fein demands, encourage a fresh IRA ceasefire and ensure Sinn Fein participation in elections.

● Edward O'Brien, who blew himself up on a bus in central London in February, was an experienced and committed terrorist who had been planning a mainland bombing campaign throughout the period of the ceasefire, an inquest was told last week.

Detective superintendent William Emerton said O'Brien was probably responsible for the bomb placed in a telephone box in the West End of London three days before the blast. It had been placed in a holdall similar to one found in O'Brien's flat.

Mawhinney on the attack

THE Conservative party chairman Brian Mawhinney last week effectively sabotaged the launch of his party's local election campaign when he made a furious attack on the media for allegedly conducting a "dump the Prime Minister campaign", *writes Patrick Wintour*.

Dr Mawhinney's tirade against the BBC's flagship radio programme Today delighted Labour and raised fresh doubts about his judgment.

Dr Mawhinney erupted when interviewer Sue MacGregor reminded him that in 1990 the Tories had "got rid of" both the poll tax and Margaret Thatcher, and suggested the party would have to do something equally dramatic to avoid losing more council seats. He exploded: "Let's stay in the real world, can we? What you have just suggested to me in front of the nation is that we should dump the Prime Minister . . . If you think I'm annoyed with you it is because it is that kind of smeary question by Today programme presenters which so annoys people who listen to this programme up and down the country."



Labour's John Prescott thanked him for "blurting out what is really being thought by most Tory MPs at the moment — dump the Prime Minister".

The Tory local election campaign is based on the familiar theme that Tory councils cost taxpayers less. But Labour's environment spokesman, Frank Dobson, relied on a form of comparison of council taxes based on Audit Commission figures to show Labour was more efficient.

His analysis of the average of all council tax figures for each council showed Liberal Democrat-run councils cost most, charging an average £567 in council tax, Tory-controlled councils cost an average £536 (excluding Westminster), and Labour ones the least on £513.

Dr Mawhinney was accused of a second blunder when he launched the Tories' "good news" tabloid newspaper Look!, *adds Sue Quinn*.

A successful small businessman profiled in the paper revealed he would probably vote Labour at the next election.

Then ballerina Darcey Bussell, who graced the front page and was described as "one of the success stories of the Government's music and ballet scheme", said she was "stunned" to be included.

Ms Bussell reportedly insisted that while she did receive a means-tested grant for her first year at the Royal Ballet School, the Look! article failed to mention that her parents had had to fund her for the next three years.

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Right urges tougher line on Europe

Michael White

JOHN MAJOR this week faced fresh pressure from the Conservative right wing after the billionaire businessman, Sir James Goldsmith, made plain he would not withdraw his threatened Referendum Party challenge. Backbench Eurosceptics stepped up demands that the Cabinet take a tougher line over the European ban on British beef.

Some of the ideas being mooted included a retaliatory ban on European imports, but on Monday the Deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine, insisted the Government was not on the brink of launching a trade war with Europe.

Sir James, who has pledged £20 million of his own money to force a referendum on "who governs Britain — Westminster or Brussels?", used a Sunday TV interview by Jonathan Dimbleby to accuse the Government of "a consistent record of appeasement" towards the European Union.

But with Mr Major reportedly having called the EU hierarchy "a bunch of shits", some Tories saw Sir James's tone as covering a discreet retreat from earlier demands for a referendum on the 1991 Maastricht treaty, rather than on the single currency issue as the Cabinet has now promised.

During a combative and flamboyant performance, the financier embraced the reported offer of talks from Mr Major's Eurosceptic ex-colleague, John Redwood, saying: "If they want to come and talk to me, I'm happy to talk."

But asked if he would drop his threat to run candidates against sitting MPs, as Mr Redwood hopes, Sir James replied: "I will listen to his point of view and reject it."

With Tory MPs braced for more pressure on the Cabinet from both sides of the party, there was speculation that bad results in the local elections on May 2 will renew talk of Mr Major standing down.

The most exotic manifestation of subtle pressure from the right wing came in the shape of claims that Mr Major had again resorted to Brixton language to express his frustrations over Europe. The Sunday Express — no longer the Prime Minister's most reliable press friend — reported that he regards his EU colleagues as having "acted like a bunch of shits" over the beef crisis.

The European Commission last week refused to lift the world-wide ban on the sale of British beef until the Government provides details of a comprehensive plan for eradicating BSE.

Speaking to journalists in Strasbourg, the Farm Commissioner, Franz Fischler, said: "The ball is still in the British court."

Mr Fischler later told members of the European Parliament that he expected the Agriculture Minister, Douglas Hogg, to present him with a strategy, including proposals for culling. These proposals will then be considered by veterinary experts from all 15 EU member states before being discussed by agricultural ministers in Luxembourg on April 30.

● Hopes that Britain can eradicate BSE from its cattle have suffered a serious setback following publication of a study which suggests the disease is carried by mites.

Scientists have discovered evidence of the infectious agent which causes scrapie (the sheep version of BSE) in hay mites on sheep in Icelandic farms. It could mean that destroying cattle would not be enough to eradicate BSE, which has been linked to the emergence of a new form of CJD in humans.

Howard was wrong to reject asylum pleas, judges rule

Barbie Dutter

THE Home Secretary wrongly rejected a clutch of asylum applications, two High Court judges ruled last week.

The latest in a series of embarrassing court rebukes for Michael Howard came days after the Government's climbdown over the deportation of the Saudi dissident Mohammed al-Mas'ari (*see page 11*).

Lawyers said the latest rulings could have important implications for hundreds of asylum seekers.

In the first case, a judge ruled that Mr Howard had applied the wrong legal test in refusing to consider renewed applications made by two Sri Lankan Tamils, who fled to the UK in 1993 after repeated torture in their homeland.

Mr Justice Dyson described how Iyathurai Sandralingam and Senathirajah Ravichandran, both aged 26, had been arrested and tortured by Sri Lankan security forces fighting Tamil Tiger separatists.

Their applications for asylum, on the basis that they had well-founded fears of persecution in their homeland, were first refused in August 1993, and subsequent appeals were rejected on the grounds that those who supported the Tigers, a terrorist organisation, were not entitled to the protection of the UN Convention on Refugees. It was also argued that they could safely be returned to Colombo.

Both men lost further appeals to the House of Lords. But in February this year, as they faced deportation, they made fresh applications for leave to enter the UK in the light of recent evidence that Tamil youths were being persecuted in Colombo.

The judge said the Home Secretary had wrongly rejected those applications on the grounds that the source of the alleged persecution had not altered, but intensified — and that was not sufficient to constitute a new asylum claim. Ordering him to reconsider both cases, the judge said he had applied the wrong test.

Hours later, another judge cast doubt on Belgium's status as a safe third country, and granted orders to five applicants quashing decisions by immigration appeal adjudicators.

It had been government policy that any asylum claimant who had been in Belgium before the UK should be returned to Belgium on the basis that it would be safe and reasonable to claim asylum there.

But Mr Justice Hidden, considering the case of three Turkish Kurds, a refugee from Togo and an Iraqi, said he was unable to agree with Mr Howard that Belgium was safe. There were "unresolved, conflicting opinions" over whether Belgium's eight-day time limit for asylum claims could lead to refugees sent back from the UK being deported subsequently.

The Home Office has indicated that there will be no appeal against the ruling in the Tamils case.

● The High Court is to rule next week on whether the Home Secretary abused his powers when he punished the schoolboy killers of James Bulger with detention for at least 15 years.

Judgment was reserved after a three-day hearing.

Lovesick parrot takes flight

David Pallister

BRUCE the parrot had an attack of lovesickness when his mate Gemma was stolen from Gatwick Zoo, so the four-year-old South American macaw went looking for her, but was caught and held to ransom.

Terry Thorpe, the zoo's part owner, thought he had lost both for ever until an anonymous man rang. Was there perhaps a reward, he inquired.

"When I said £300 was being offered, the caller said he knew the parrot was worth more than that and demanded £300 more," Mr Thorpe said.

Over the next three weeks the man made several more calls trying to arrange a price.

"The caller never threatened to harm Bruce," Mr Thorpe said. But Bruce had apparently been complaining noisily about his captivity, and neighbours reported the squawking to police.

Officers rescued him from a house in Battle, East Sussex. A man was arrested and released on police bail pending further inquiries.

Bruce, who is worth £1,000, is back on his perch, his blue and gold feathers apparently unruffled, but Gemma is still being sought.

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Nursing faces an 'acute shortage'

David Brindle

HOSPITALS are heading for an acute shortage of nurses because of a fall of a third over the next two years in numbers coming out of training, the Royal College of Nursing warned its annual congress in Bournemouth.

Forecasts show that only 9,000 qualified nurses will emerge from training in 1997/98 compared with 14,000 in 1995/96, according to the college. In 1983, the figure was 37,000.

Christine Hancock, RCN general secretary, claimed the Government's "head-in-the-sand" attitude to training had put health services on course for an acute recruitment crisis.

She said that such a drastic fall in the number of registered nurses was a serious threat to the health service and the private sector.

There have been reports recently of NHS trusts seeking to recruit overseas nurses to plug the gaps. Trusts have been spreading their nets as far afield as Finland, Canada and Australia.

The nurses' pay review body said in February that while it did not believe there was a general problem, there were "signs that more general shortages may emerge".

Ms Hancock said forecasting was dogged by the Government's failure to collect adequate statistics of nurse numbers. The RCN was planning to set up its own workforce planning model to predict the national demand for qualified staff.

One key issue was that in cutting sharply the number of training places, the Government had failed to account for steep increases in demand by private nursing homes and by family doctors.

"The Government has not properly monitored the increase outside the mainstream NHS. I think there was some sort of implicit view that the number of nurses was going to drop," Ms Hancock said.

The Department of Health said it "did not recognise the figures cited by the RCN". A spokeswoman said: "All the evidence we have is that the match between supply and demand for nurses is better than it has ever been, although we do recognise there are local difficulties in some specialist areas."

● The RCN, which is seeking a judicial review of a decision to restore a convicted rapist to the nurses' register, tried to stop him being struck off in the first place.

The RCN's apparently ambivalent stance, which it admits reflects the tensions of its dual role as trade union and professional association, emerged through scrutiny of the official transcript of the 1986 hearing at which Yuen How Choy was struck off.

It also reveals that Mr Choy had not only been convicted of raping a former patient, and of giving a patient a sedative in order to have sex with her, but had been investigated over two other sex incidents.

Police said that when interviewed, Mr Choy had described himself as "a randy little bugger".

The decision to restore Mr Choy to the nurses' register has caused uproar in the profession.

An RCN spokeswoman said: "We have a role as a trade union to protect our members and make sure they have a fair hearing. But we also have a role as a professional body and there is a tension between these roles.

"We judge every issue as it comes up and we believe now that Mr Choy should not have been reinstated."

Maverick lawyer lays down law

Clare Dyer

THE MAVERICK president of the Law Society confirmed his reputation as "the deepest of reactionaries" when he tried to convince an audience of 300 women barristers and solicitors that zealots had made men victims of discrimination.

Martin Mears, who trounced the society's official candidate last July, denied at a conference called Changing the Culture that women suffered any disadvantages in the legal profession. The conference, at the Law Society in London, was the second in a series designed to identify and rectify problems facing women.

Mr Mears met a stony silence as he launched his latest diatribe. He said it was "a nonsense and a fiction" that women suffered prejudice in the public or quasi public sector, and it was men who were discriminated against.

The leader of the 70,000 solicitors in England and Wales castigated "discrimination zealots who thrive on grievances and heresy-hunting and use minorities as raw material for their whinge factories".

He said the gap between the proportion of women and men achieving partnership at the expected time — 54 per cent of women and 79 per cent of men reach partnership within 10 to 19 years of qualifying — could be largely explained by women's career breaks to raise families.

In nearly all the circles in which he mixed, "feminism is the orthodoxy, and it is a bold heretic who challenges any of its doctrines".

He wanted to confirm his reactionary reputation by saying that male warders had no place in a female prison or female warders in a male prison. And the "taboo" against female combat soldiers, which the Defence Secretary was said to be thinking of abolishing, should be reinforced.

The Bar's chairman, David Penry-Davey QC, was applauded as he departed from his speech to tell Mr Mears: "I believe there are problems, and that the presence of so many people at this conference is some indication of the reality."

CRITICS have rounded on the 500ft-high Ferris wheel, proposed for the millennium celebrations in London, as ghastly and frivolous, *writes John Cunningham.*

While there is no disguising its mammoth size, backers of the £9 million Ferris are stressing its minimal requirements.

In silver and white, it will hardly be an eyesore, the tidal Thames will generate half the power it needs, no public funds or lottery money is involved — backing will come from sponsors and commercial investors — and it will be taken down after five years.

However, these assurances, and even the enthusiasm of architects such as Sir Norman Foster and Sir Richard Rogers for this millennial *jeu d'esprit*, have not enamoured the project to Sir Roy Strong, former director of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

He said: "It will be an extension of those awful garden festivals that have to do with urban regeneration. They usually leave one structure behind afterwards. It will be ghastly."

Lord St John of Fawsley, chairman of the Royal Fine Art Commission, said the Ferris "will be highly unsuitable" for a central Thames site, and should be built in a development area.

If planning permission is granted by Lambeth council, the wheel will go up on the South Bank, in Jubilee Gardens, between Westminster and Hungerford bridges. Construction should be completed by the summer of 1998.

'Depressing shock' as spy wins royalties fight

Richard Norton-Taylor

THE Government suffered a humiliating defeat in the High Court last week when Sir Richard Scott dismissed its attempt to seize £90,000 owed to George Blake, the Soviet agent, for his memoirs.

Sir Richard ruled that the Government's claim that Blake — who lives in Moscow — could not gain financially from writing anything about his work as a spy amounted to "an interference with his rights of free expression".

His judgment, described by Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, as a "depressing shock", demolished what in effect was a backdoor attempt to bolster official secrecy by extending Crown copyright to cover anything published without authority by former civil servants, armed forces personnel, and members of the intelligence services:

"A duty to refrain from disclosing information that at the time of disclosure is neither secret nor confidential is not, in my judgment, necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security," said Sir Richard in a judgment which raises further questions about the competence of the Attorney General, Sir Nicholas Lyell.

Blake wrote his autobiography, No Other Choice, in 1990, 34 years after escaping from Wormwood Scrubs prison in west London. Sir Nicholas claimed that advances agreed with his publisher, Jonathan Cape, must be handed over to the Government.

In a passage echoing a central theme in his report into the arms-to-Iraq affair, Sir Richard criticised the Government for excessive secrecy.

"The duty imposed by the law would not prevent the publication of originally secret information that had already become public knowledge," Sir Richard said. The Government had conceded that Blake had not breached his duty of confidence since — through his spying activities as well as previous books about him — the Russians did not glean anything from his autobiography they did not already know.

In No Other Choice, Blake describes how he was converted to communism when captured by North Korean troops during the Korean war. He declined to estimate how many British agents in the Soviet Union or eastern Europe were executed or jailed as a result of his spying.

In Brief

THE Duke and Duchess of York's marriage ended when they were granted a decree nisi in the High Court. The duchess said that she and the duke would remain the "bestest of friends".

Queen at 70, page 12

TWO of the Tories' longest-standing and largest corporate donors — Rolls-Royce and Sun Alliance — have axed their political contributions.

TWO prostitutes who bought the first successful private prosecution for rape have been awarded £5,000 each in compensation. Women's groups criticised the size of the award for discriminating against them because of their profession.

TEACHERS at a Nottingham school have called for a strike in protest at the return to school of a boy aged 13 who they say is violent and disruptive.

SENIOR ministers are pressing for a deal to raise MPs' pay and pensions before the summer recess as a way of retaining the loyalty of a key block of Tory backbenchers.

CHRISTOPHER Robin Milne, confidant of Winnie the Pooh and son of the bear's creator, A A Milne, has died aged 75.

BUSINESSMAN Terence Howe was fined £15,000 for smuggling aircraft and helicopter parts to Iran through his company, British Hovercraft and Marine Consultants.

A BOOK by Christopher Brand, which claims black people are less intelligent than whites, was withdrawn from publication.

EMMA Thompson's lavish film version of Sense And Sensibility won three British Academy Awards, including best actress. Nigel Hawthorne was named best actor for his role in The Madness Of King George.

GIRLS have overtaken boys in all subjects at GCSE and the majority of teachers are women, but schools are still run overwhelmingly by men, according to studies by the Equal Opportunities Commission and East London University.

THE BIRMINGHAM Six, who were released on appeal in 1991 after 16 years in prison for the 1974 IRA pub bombings, suffered irreversible trauma, according to a leading medical expert, and are seeking compensation for what they believe were inadequate final offers.

THE IRISH writer, Molly Keane, whose career began under the pseudonym of M J Farrell, has died aged 91.

James Lewis is on holiday

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Hardline British Muslim leader dies

Madeleine Bunting and Barbie Dutter

HUNDREDS of Muslims gathered on Sunday in an emotional open-air tribute to Britain's prominent hardline Muslim leader, Kalim Siddiqui.

He was described by guest speakers, including Yusuf Islam, the former pop star Cat Stevens, as "the leading Muslim of his generation" during passionate speeches at the two-hour service.

The founder of the Muslim Parliament in Great Britain died last week from a heart attack. He had undergone bypass surgery last June.

Dr Siddiqui achieved fame when he backed the Ayatollah Khomeini's fatwa on Salman Rushdie and demanded Britain chop off the hands of thieves.

The father of three died in South Africa, during a conference on his vision of a new Islamic civilisation. His speeches were broadcast to more than 300,000 people.

Dr Siddiqui's associate, Dr Mohammed Ghyassuadin, said: "He represented the internal ethos of millions of people all over the world."

Yaqub Zaki, a member of the Muslim Parliament, said: "It is a comment on the sad state of the Muslim world today that such a man was not at the helm of a Muslim nation and had to do his work here in exile."

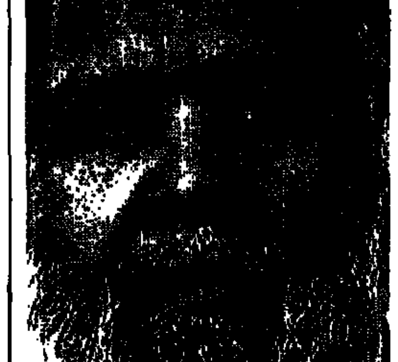
Radical British Muslims could be further marginalised by his death, members of the community said. Many expressed concern that Dr Siddiqui leaves behind no obvious successor to speak for the radical section of the Muslim community, increasingly frustrated by what they perceive to be widespread religious discrimination.

"He articulated a strong Muslim identity in a British context, and he could reach the grassroots which more moderate figures couldn't do," said Fuad Nahdi, editor the Muslim weekly, Q News.

"He spoke directly to a militant, British-born Muslim generation who had lost the traditional respect for British institutions and were deeply disillusioned with organisations like the Commission for Racial Equality."

The fear is that this constituency will turn to even more radical groups such as Hizb ut Tahrir and al-Muhajiroun Immigrants to express their frustration.

Dr Siddiqui's death comes at a critical juncture for the Muslim Parliament, which he founded in 1992 as a focus for the deeply fragmented Islamic community, just as a new — more moderate — national body for Muslims is to be launched by Iqbal Sacranie, a Home Office adviser on Muslim affairs. Most believe the parliament will survive, but in the bitter jockeying for position in the community and in its relations with government it could be marginalised.



Kalim Siddiqui leaves a vacuum

Mas'ari can stay in Britain

Seumas Milne

SAUDI dissidents are poised to begin live radio and television broadcasts to Saudi Arabia from London from the beginning of next month, it emerged last week as the Government's climbdown over the deportation of Mohammed al-Mas'ari appeared to have defused the crisis in British-Saudi relations.

Mr Mas'ari was told by the Home Office that he would be allowed to live in Britain and campaign against the Saudi regime for at least four years. Last month, the Government's attempt to expel him to the Caribbean island of Dominica was overruled by the Chief Immigration Appeals Adjudicator.

The decision to give the Islamist dissident full rights to travel and have his family live with him in Britain means Mr Mas'ari has been granted political asylum in all but name, immigration experts said.

The Saudi authorities appeared to accept that the Government had made sufficient efforts to meet their demands for action against their critics in London.

But Mr Mas'ari's rival Islamist dissident and former right-hand man, Sa'ad Faqih, last week unveiled a £150,000 home-made studio and battery of hi-tech broadcasting equipment in a north London suburbs which looks certain to reignite the Saudi royal family's rage.

He is to broadcast weekly anti-Saudi satellite propaganda to the oil-rich kingdom from the beginning of next month.

Rumours that Mr Mas'ari and other Middle Eastern political exiles were planning to make *samizdat* broadcasts from Britain led the Government to close a legal loophole last month which allowed broadcasts to non-European states without a licence.

But Dr Faqih said that his group had made arrangements to keep their radio and television channels entirely within the letter of British law. He plans to begin with weekly radio broadcasts, followed by television broadcasts. They will be carried via the Internet to an unnamed European country, from where they will be broadcast via satellite to Saudi Arabia at a cost of around £200,000 a year.

● Journalists on the BBC's Arabic service have been sent home on full pay after the Saudi-owned Orbit Communications, which owns the satellite that transmits the service to the Middle East, cut off transmission.

War crimes, nothing less

KILLING CIVILIANS is a barbaric act, whether at a UN base in south Lebanon or outside a Cairo hotel. Last week's attack by militant gunmen, in which 17 Greek tourists and an Egyptian were killed, was promptly labelled a massacre. The same word applies to the slaughter inflicted by Israeli shells on the Lebanese civilians sheltering in the village of Qana. Yes, the gunmen intended to kill tourists (thinking they were Israelis rather than Greeks). And yes, the Israeli army did not intend to hit the base where the Lebanese had taken refuge, but may have been firing wildly, or in anger, after a Katyusha rocket was apparently launched from nearby. But to undertake such reckless action, as part of a campaign which for the past two weeks has been designed to terrorise and punish the civilian population of south Lebanon, is morally indistinguishable. Something like this was bound to happen: indeed the killing of nine civilians earlier in the day in a rocket attack on Nabatiyeh (they should not have been there, said Shimon Peres) was bad enough. As in the cases of previous incidents, including the attack on an ambulance, it was both unjustified in military terms and a breach of international agreements on the protection of civilians in times of conflict. What happened hours later was different only in scale. Is there any reason not to regard these appalling incidents as plain crimes of war?

The response from Israel was on the grudging lines of foreign minister Ehud Barak's comment that "we are very sorry about any harm done to civilians". This will go down in the annals of inadequate response. But Israel should realise that this incident will do as much damage to its cause as the mortar shelling of the Sarajevo marketplace did to the Bosnian Serbs. Israel's allies can no longer maintain a complicit silence: the UN Secretary-General has condemned the Israeli offensive — in terms which he should have used days before. Friends of Israel must understand that this is a disaster for the country as well as for the region. If it leads to the sort of cool reflection which has been lacking from the whole Israeli campaign, that at least may save more lives. Mr Peres is a man of thought, who is certainly capable of grasping the moral dimension and of calculating the benefit of long-term progress against short-term gain. It is a tragedy that, whether entirely voluntarily or under pressure from the army, he has allowed the quest for electoral advantage — and the illusory aim of compelling Syria to give ground — to sweep aside all other consideration.

The political atmosphere of the Middle East is notoriously changeable. Just weeks ago in Egypt the threat of militant violence was judged to be on the wane: the tourists were back and the capital calm. Yet this had been achieved without any attempt to offer a political solution to the fundamentalist challenge. Thousands of militants were jailed and the Muslim Brotherhood was boxed out of last November's elections — but there was no equivalent offensive against poverty and unemployment. In Israel, a moderately hopeful climate has been transformed for the worse in a very short time with the terrorists and Israel each compounding the damage inflicted by the other side. To become obsessed by Syria, and by every incoming Katyusha rocket, is to surrender to the opposition forces which Mr Peres seeks to defeat in the election. The war in Lebanon once again threatens to consume the peace. Mr Peres and his cabinet must pause, clear their vision, and call an end.

Papering over the nuclear cracks

HAVE WE stepped back from the nuclear precipice? The summit talks in Moscow barely grappled with the real issues in spite of Bill Clinton's complacent claim. The Ukraine has finally agreed to confirm the closure of Chernobyl by 2000 — though there may be more haggling over the price. But for all the talk of highest priorities and shared objectives, nothing was done to lessen the chance of a second Chernobyl elsewhere. Instead of a vigorous international programme backed by compensation, this was left to "national efforts" and "peer review". Upgrading rather than closing is the easy path to agreement — and perhaps to another disaster. Discussion of nuclear and fissile materials security was even more perfunctory, out of deference to the election candidate whom the West pretends not to support. Boris Yeltsin's chances would indeed be prejudiced if opponents could accuse him of discussing Russia's "military secrets".

Russian critics have a point: this is not solely a former-Soviet Union problem. The US has its own concerns about the task of maintaining high confidence in an ageing stockpile. As Pugwash's founder Professor Joseph Rotblat has urged, any serious international effort must tackle the root question: how to eliminate the nuclear weapons which create the fissile stocks.

A comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT), to which Russia formally assented in Moscow, is a step forward. Yet this has been left on the agenda for so long that it may now be frustrated by India and other nuclear-threshold countries. Even if it can be achieved, it is not the passport to a non-nuclear world. The nuclear powers have been constrained to commit themselves — in last year's renewal of the non-proliferation treaty — to the long-term goal of complete elimination. But as a new report from the British American Security Information Council shows, they are busy devising new nuclear doctrines and weapons systems.

For the farmer or child who stumbles across one of the millions of land-mines sown by recent wars, the little bang is just as devastating as the big one. The Geneva talks this week on the UN Inhumane Weapons Convention must also decide whether to tinker with the problem or tackle the root cause. No one pretends that de-mining the world would be any easier than de-nuclearising it. Yet opposition is weakening as the tragic consequences of land-mines have become more visible. Australia and Germany have now joined 27 other states in favour of a global ban. Senior US generals, past and present, are agonising over the issue. Britain is increasingly isolated in claiming that mines are legitimate weapons of war and may feel obliged to fall into step with its Nato allies.

A ban on land-mines, if achieved, will be a rare victory. No doubt it has "helped" that 26,000 people are killed or injured by mines each year around the world — and, crucially, that a tiny number of them have been US soldiers in Bosnia. Chernobyl "helped" too (though not yet enough). But disaster-led disarmament is a miserable way to proceed: do we have to wait for something far worse before we can ban the bomb?

The silence of the songbirds

HARK, HARK, the lark at heaven's gate sings, but these days it's getting harder to hear one. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and seven other leading conservation bodies last week warned that 23 species are now in the highest category of concern in Britain (where there has been a 50 per cent reduction in breeding population or range over the past 25 years), including for the first time farmland birds such as the turtle dove, tree sparrow, bullfinch, reed bunting, song thrush — and the famous skylark. A previous survey, from the late 1980's, listed just eight species in this category.

Pinning down the exact cause of decline is not always possible, but there are some obvious suspects. Farming has become much more intensive, producing a tidier countryside which is less bird-friendly. Pesticides kill off insects and seed-producing weeds. The grey partridge's chicks can no longer find the fat juicy insects which they need. Seed-seeking species such as the buntings and finches suffer. Rotational cereal planting, with stubble fields ploughed up instead of being left through the winter, creates a sterile environment. So does the continuing shrinkage of hedgerows, which deprives the linnet and other species of safe nest-building sites. Villages and town suburbs are becoming zones of refuge for birds driven off the hostile land.

Most of these birds are not yet rare: the RSPB's efficient monitoring system reckons there are still a million song-thrushes around. But 25 years ago there were 2 million and the pace of decline is probably increasing. Nature — as we have seen in the beef disaster — exacts a high price for being tampered with. To confuse its enemies, the lark descends in silence for the last few metres. We shall know how much we have lost when it is silent all the way.

Mother of misfortune

Simon Hoggart reflects on the woes of the House of Windsor on the Queen's 70th birthday



ITS rough being a monarchist these days, especially in the week of the Queen's 70th birthday. And some of us still are monarchists. There's a myth loved by some on the left, that if we could only abolish the royal family, Britain would be prosperous, cohesive and resurgent once again. Cutting the head off the class system would kill the whole creature, from the grandest dukes down to Hyacinth Bucket.

But it's absurd to think that the royals can be blamed for our problems. They go much deeper than that. And the myth ignores the fact that some of the most successful countries in the world, countries we are supposed to admire for their vigour and clear-eyed commitment to the future are also monarchies: Holland, Belgium, Spain, Japan and most Scandinavian countries, for starters. So, technically at least, are Canada and Australia. Seven of the 15 European Union nations have royal heads of state. You don't find Japanese people whingeing that the Emperor has held back car exports.

The monarch provides an impotent focus for the great institutions of the land who are — the theory goes — obliged to offer fealty to a symbolic notion of the state rather than to each other. It's one form of the separation of powers, a concept highly esteemed in the United States. Anyone who thinks that by sacking the Queen we would create a single new job, prevent one crime, or give any child a better start in life, is crazed.

And what would replace her? Left-of-centre think-tanks may imagine their ideas would prevail; in fact, we would be stuck with whatever the government of the day thinks would serve it in the short term.

But the Windsors? This lot? Do we need *them*? Are we stuck with this family until they abdicate in bulk, or a mob storms Buckingham Palace? Those questions are worth asking as the media bend their collective knee in obeisance to the Queen on her birthday.

To be fair, there are subtle psychological reasons for this cascade of toadyism. Back in the recesses of its pickled brain the British press does feel just a tremor of guilt for what it has done to the royals. This week they have decided that they ought to be nice, at least to their victim's old Mum.

Nor are the woes of the family entirely their fault. None of us could survive the relentless attentions of the press, the knowledge that nothing whatsoever in your life is private, the suspicion that your servants may be inspecting your sheets for stains in the hope of selling the information to a paper. Whose marriage could survive being lived — permanently — on the wrong end of a telephoto lens?

And yet the Queen must take a measure of the blame. What is astonishing is not how much has changed in the court since she came to the throne, but how little. Coming from a family which was ruthless in re-inventing itself in order to survive, it's amazing how unadaptable she herself has proved.

That lack of flexibility stems in part, perhaps, from her apparent willingness to exist quite happily in a world of her own, largely unaware of how the rest of us live. A friend of mine found himself seated next to her at one of her regular Buckingham Palace lunches, designed to introduce her to interesting people from the world outside. Her opening words, even before "How are you?" were: "You can have no idea how much work is involved in maintaining a private golf course."

Her favourite television programme is The Last Of The Summer Wine, which similarly bears no relation to the real world. But it does resemble her own life in many ways: elderly people, trapped in a time-warp, endlessly discussing meaningless trivia.

Much of her reign has been devoted to holding on to the trappings of pomp which might have been appropriate 100 years ago, but are they now? The writer Graham Turner recently revealed that the most furious tirade she ever unleashed on a government minister was against Geoffrey Rippon who, as Minister of Housing, had dared allow the new London Hilton to overlook Buckingham Palace.

SHE HAS, admittedly, let some of the ceremonial go hang. For instance, though guests at a formal dinner are supposed to finish eating the moment she does, she will push a final pea round her plate until everyone has had enough. (Princess Margaret is less considerate and a lot more pompous; even at private parties all must down tools when she does, and no one is permitted to go to bed before her.)

The Queen has demonstrated terrific loyalty to the Commonwealth, and there is not a leader of any hue who thinks she is remotely racist — quite a triumph considering her own mother and husband's views on lesser breeds. Yet when I watched her doing a walkabout in Barbados I noticed that she moved from each of the few white faces in the crowd, ignoring those in between. It was clearly hurtful and bewildering to the locals. On the other hand, few of them probably knew much about horse-racing, which is her first interest. She spends some £400,000 a year on it.

It's hard for anyone under 35 to comprehend just how deferential the media used to be to the royals.

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The most heavily coded criticism was received with astonished outrage. When writers such as Malcolm Muggeridge and John Grigg suggested that she might draw her staff from a wider social circle, they were physically attacked.

Yet, despite this enormous shift in public attitude, there has been almost no change at the Palace. The Queen is still surrounded by people who combine upper-class confidence with mannered deference. It's astonishing to us now that even a few years ago she assumed the public would happily cough up for the repairs to Windsor Castle. It boggles the mind to think that she only agreed to pay taxes when told she had no choice.

Does she realise yet just how terrible the crisis of the Windsors has become? That her heir has become a national joke? That the failure of three out of the four marriages so far contracted by her children is a source of despair? That they have swapped majesty for the status of international soap stars?

There's no need for pop psychology to explain the problems with relationships suffered by her offspring. We should remember that the received wisdom in the post-war years was that you shouldn't show too much affection to your children, because that would stop them becoming independent. Yet the sight of her *not* hugging the tiny Prince Charles on a railway platform after months on a Commonwealth tour still haunts the mind.

In his biography, the prince told Jonathan Dimbleby that his mother spent only an hour and a half a day with him when he was a child. The extraordinary stoicism she possesses may work for a ceremonial head of state but can be disastrous for a mother.

By all accounts the relationship with Charles is even more distant now. The two courts have long been bitter rivals. One of his aides recently recalled how almost every time they asked to use the Royal Train, some engagement for the Queen would be trumped up by her courtiers to prevent them.

Does this matter? All parents make mistakes, some of them terrible. We can only hope that our children will forgive us. But in a sense, raising happy, well-balanced children is *the* crucial job for the head of any royal family, far more important than opening hospitals and getting briefings from the Prime Minister about the public sector borrowing requirement. Little else matters.

Yes, Rupert Murdoch and those who have crawled after him are very largely to blame. Countries such as the US, whose national symbols are inert objects, may be luckier: there is no danger of the Statue of Liberty having her toes sucked on holiday. But, sadly, it was the dysfunctional royal family which handed Murdoch his raw material.

We can wish the Queen a happy birthday, we can pay tribute to her hard work — though she has some terrifically long holidays. We can thank her for the skill she has brought to her public engagements.

Yet the monarchy, and through it Britain's system of government, is in worse shape now than it has been since the death of George IV. There is scant enthusiasm for Charles III and no agreement on what might substitute for him. In the middle of the eulogies we might just think of tossing a little of the blame towards Her Majesty.

UN needs a fresh leader

Victoria Brittain

AFTER a month in which war has plunged the civilian population of two countries — Lebanon and Liberia — into the miseries of death, displacement and hunger, while the United Nations has displayed not one whit of moral leadership, it is time to say that its leader, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, must not get the second term of office he is secretly campaigning for.

The UN after 50 years is in an unprecedented crisis of cash and credibility. It will be bankrupt in August without a change of policy by the US, which owes $1.5 billion. The only chance of saving it is the election of a secretary-general of high moral stature, with a record of fearless telling of unpopular truths, and with the instincts of a democratic politician. There is an obvious candidate with those qualities and one extra — she's a woman. Mary Robinson, President of Ireland.

Under the byzantine and undemocratic practices of the UN, the secretary-general is appointed by a consensus of the Big Five in the Security Council: the US, UK, France, Russia and China. There is no open campaigning, and there is a gentleman's agreement that no secretary-general who wants a second term should be denied it.

Boutros-Ghali, whose five-year term ends on December 31, has not said he's running again, but it is an open secret that he wants to. As the consummate diplomat who has never offended anyone in power in his life (except for one uncharacteristic spat with US ambassador Madeleine Albright), this highly educated, multi-lingual 74-year-old suits the Security Council and is the odds-on favourite.

But something unusual is happening. A groundswell of support for Mrs Robinson has been sparked, in part, by an article in her favour in Nation, a US magazine. Photocopies are circulating in the UN building, where morale is at rock-bottom after a heavy dose of job cuts. Even senior officials admit privately that the secretary-general may be part of the organisation's problem.

In Britain, faxed copies of the Nation article were circulating well before the magazine appeared on news-stands. Senior members of the United Nations Association had already lobbied the Foreign Office to propose alternative names to Boutros-Ghali's, and were appalled to find that there were none. (Could that have been because the other two names most often mentioned are also formidable women — Gro Harlem Brundtland, Norway's prime minister, and Sadaka Ogata, head of the UN's refugee organisation?)

It is fashionable to let Boutros-Ghali off the hook by saying that the UN's recent debacles in peace-keeping come from the Security Council's failure to agree proper mandates or funding. These have played an important part in some of the catastrophes of the past four years, but they pale into insignificance against the misjudgments of the secretary-general in Somalia, Western Sahara, Angola and Rwanda — just four of the countries virtually destroyed by his policies.

In Somalia he undermined his own representative whose subtle political bridge-building gave the country a chance of peace which was shattered by a US military operation backed by the UN. In Western Sahara he has allowed the King of Morocco to stall indefinitely a referendum on self-determination, and turned the UN's mission, MINURSO, into an open scandal. In Angola he pressed ahead with UN supervision of an election in 1992 which was, in the opinion of many observers, bound to fail, and he subsequently made respectable a terrorist organisation which destroyed the country's infrastructure and killed half a million people in a new war. In Rwanda he could have checked the genocide which killed a million people. The less-than-straightforward UN attempts to absolve him of responsibility, following an evaluation of the Rwanda genocide by dozens of independent specialists, goes to the heart of why he must be replaced.

Boutros-Ghali comes from a culture too polite and passive to deter killers who have seen the impunity with which force is used from Chechenia to Rwanda. Mrs Robinson came to lead Ireland from a background as a lawyer fighting for civil liberties for the least represented communities: the poor, women, unemployed people and travellers. In a ceremonial job, she has set new agendas for justice and tolerance. The UN needs such a visionary who could break down the cynicism and hopelessness which now symbolise the world body's failure.

The return of Citizen Keynes

It is 50 years since John Maynard Keynes died. **Tony Thirlwall** says his work is as relevant as ever

LAST WEEKEND marked the fiftieth anniversary of the death of John Maynard Keynes, the greatest economist of this century, and one of the very few social scientists to lend their name to a revolution in their discipline. He dominated the economic stage and had the ear of politicians and prime ministers for nearly 30 years.

Keynes lived life to the full, not only as an economist and statesman, but also as a journalist, banker, art collector, bibliophile, patron of the arts, and bursar of King's College, Cambridge. Part of the secret of his success was his ability to compartmentalise his affairs; to concentrate on the task in hand, and then switch off.

What Keynes did, against the background of depression in the thirties, was to revolutionise the way economists think about the workings of the economy at the macro level. In particular, he showed how high unemployment can persist over long periods (orthodox theory predicted it to be a temporary phenomenon rectifiable by the free play of market forces). Throughout his life, Keynes campaigned for full employment as the *sine qua non* of a civilised society. He never lived to see the golden age of full employment that most industrialised economies enjoyed until the early seventies. Now, his vision has all but vanished, and European economies appear paralysed at rates of unemployment topping 10 per cent.

Keynes's attack on the classical orthodoxy in his greatest work, The General Theory Of Employment, Interest And Money (1936), contained two revolutionary propositions. The first was that the rate of interest is not the price that balances saving and investment, so that a deficiency of what economists call "aggregate demand" for goods and labour is possible; and second, that cutting wages will not necessarily create more jobs, because less money in workers' pockets means less purchasing power. Economies left to their own devices may get stuck in depression with heavy involuntary unemployment for long periods; only the government can rectify this through fiscal policy.

Keynes's General Theory still provides the backbone of macroeconomic theory in terms of the concepts it introduced. But its conclusions have come under continual attack, particularly from across the Atlantic, where there is a greater distrust of the role of government. The immediate classical response was to continue to argue that if wages and prices are flexible, unemployment will right itself, so that Keynesian involuntary unemployment must depend on rigid wages and prices.

In the sixties, inflation began to rear its ugly head and Milton Friedman launched his monetarist counter-revolution, the essence of which was to say that governments cannot spend their way out of unemployment without ever-accelerating inflation, the root cause of which is excessive growth of the money supply. According to Friedman, economies will gravitate to a "natural" rate of unemployment, determined by real, not monetary, forces.

An even fiercer onslaught under the name of the new classical macroeconomics, led by Robert Lucas, followed in the seventies. This argued that Keynesian economics had outlived its usefulness because it could not explain the combination of high unemployment and rising prices (or "stagflation").

There is a simple reply to each of these critiques. First, the possibility of involuntary unemployment does not depend on the rigidity of money wages and prices. The ability to hold money in liquid form creates great uncertainty for an economy, because, as Keynes put it so graphically: "A decision not to have dinner today — does not necessitate a decision to have dinner or to buy a pair of boots a week or a year hence or to consume any specified thing at any specified date . . . It is not a substitution of future consumption demand for present consumption demand — it is a net diminution of such demand."

Second, both Friedman's model of the natural rate of unemployment, and Lucas's of the business cycle, deny the existence of involuntary unemployment from the outset. Both assume what needs to be proved: that markets do not always "clear" on the basis of voluntary exchange.



Revolution in the head . . . Keynes changed the way 20th century economists think at the macro level

In the early eighties, at the height of the recession, were the thousands who queued for jobs voluntarily unemployed? When unemployment in the UK fell from 3.4 million in 1986 to 1.6 million in 1990 as a result of financial liberalisation and tax cuts, had the nearly 2 million who were absorbed into the system been voluntarily unemployed until then? The answer is clearly no. From the monetarist experiment of the early eighties to the fiasco of Britain's exit from the exchange rate mechanism in 1992, employment and unemployment have responded to the vicissitudes of monetary and fiscal policy exactly as one would have predicted from a Keynesian model. The notions of continuous "market clearing" and no involuntary unemployment were discredited in the eighties. They continue to be discredited today with unemployment in Britain at more than 2 million.

A British monetarist, Professor Patrick Minford, who had argued that the natural level of unemployment in the UK was more than 3 million, now concedes that more than a million of the currently unemployed are so involuntarily. Now Friedman's crude monetarism is dead; the new classical macroeconomics is no longer fashionable, and the empirical evidence seems to be on the side of the Keynesians.

This is not to say, however, that Keynesianism is enough. In most economies there is growing "structural" unemployment (reflecting outdated or no longer competitive products and skills) to contend with. Keynesian economics does not address this. Second, and a related point, the trade-off between inflation and unemployment has worsened through time, and this requires institutional remedies. Third, many countries, including the UK, have structural balance of payments problems to contend with, on which closed-economy Keynesian economics is silent. He would surely have been horrified today to witness the countries of Europe attempting to lock themselves into a monetary straitjacket in the form of a single currency when the real conditions in each economy require quite different policies to maintain full employment.

Keynes had a broad vision of the functioning of capitalist economies, rare among economists today. For Keynes, economics was a moral science to be used as a means to the end of making the world a more civilised place in which to live. Keynes's abiding legacy will be to have shown that the free market cannot guarantee long-run full employment, which therefore establishes a role for the State in the economic affairs of the nation. It is true, as Keynes said, that "in the long run we are all dead", but Keynesian modes of thinking are still very much alive, and are as relevant today as they ever were.
— *The Observer*

IMF calls for global public spending cuts

Sarah Ryle in Washington

THE International Monetary Fund last week prescribed fiscal discipline which it insisted must be swallowed by leading economies unless they wanted to see growth slip back from already modest levels.

Fears about the weakness of the dollar which were paramount at last year's round of IMF/World Bank spring meetings appear to have eased, pushing the drive to get budgets under control to the top of the agenda set by the World Economic Outlook.

The IMF's experts ruled out widespread and severe slowdown across the globe this year, insisting that global growth was set to pick up pace.

But they admitted that their forecasts for growth last year had been much too optimistic, especially in western Europe and North America. This was reflected in predictions for industrial countries this year and next year — 2 per cent and 2.6 per cent respectively. The outlook for the Group of Seven industrialised nations was even less positive, with growth put at a mere 1.9 per cent this year.

The slowdown was not uniform, however, and IMF staff said that in cases such as the US it was welcomed because of the potential build-up of inflationary pressures.

It was less marked in some parts of Europe, notably Britain and Italy whose currencies had depreciated since 1992 and which had experienced more growth and falling unemployment — unlike countries with currencies linked to the German mark.

For Germany itself growth is projected at just 1 per cent this year before recovering to 2.9 per cent in 1997; in France this year's 1.3 per cent should improve to 2.8 per cent.

Despite the caution over industrial countries, the IMF said that global growth would be buoyed up by the performance of emerging markets, bringing the forecast for this year's world GDP growth to 4 per cent.

It warned that even the modest predictions for the industrialised countries were under threat from insufficiently tight fiscal control — the IMF's way of saying that public spending needs to be cut. It went on to say: "The ballooning of public debt in industrial countries over the past two decades of relative world peace and prosperity is unprecedented."

It called on industrial countries to work harder to balance their budgets, which it said have had the effect of pushing up interest rates, damaging private investment.

It suggested that tax increases would not be the main solution for budgets in the red. The pain would have to come from cuts in public services, although the IMF recognised that this would be politically sensitive in many countries.

There also would have to be sizeable reforms to public spending schemes, particularly health and pension provision, according to a special report on the effect of ageing populations.

In Brief

THE Bundesbank cut interest rates to a record low in an attempt to boost the recession-hit German economy. Central banks in Denmark, Belgium and the Netherlands followed suit.

THE $24 billion Nynex and Bell Atlantic merger came under attack by rivals MCI and AT&T, by calls for investigations from the United States Justice Department and Federal Communications Commission.

APPLE Computer posted a record second quarter loss of $740 million, with sales down 18 per cent on last year. Competitor IBM saw sales up 5.2 per cent.

CAMPAIGNERS for American haemophiliacs infected with HIV from tainted blood have won a $640 million settlement from drug companies, or $100,000 per claimant.

EUROTUNNEL, the Channel Tunnel operator, reported a $1.3 billion loss, mostly in interest charges. Its $12.6 billion debt is rising by $3 million a day. But co-chairman Sir Alastair Morton pointed out that the company had grabbed almost half the cross-Channel market in its first year of operations.

UK unemployment fell to its lowest for five years, helped by the growth in part-time work, which accounted for three out of four jobs taken up last winter.

THE Labour party called for an independent audit of Treasury books after a $48 billion deficit for last year, $4.5 billion above forecasts, emerged.

UK electricity takeovers continued with a merger approach for National Power, the biggest generator, by the American Southern Company.

ASSOCIATED Newspapers, which owns the Daily Mail, paid $30 million for a 20 per cent stake in the news broadcaster, ITN.

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

	Sterling rates April 22	Sterling rates April 18
Australia	1.9127-1.9165	1.9074-1.9095
Austria	16.11-10.12	16.00-16.02
Belgium	47.06-47.14	46.75-46.79
Canada	2 0580-2.0597	2.0440-2.0457
Denmark	8.83-8.84	8.78-8.79
France	7.75-7.75	7.72-7.72
Germany	2.2907-2.2925	2.2762-2.2783
Hong Kong	11.69-11.70	11.65-11.66
Ireland	0.9671-0.9685	0.9678-0.9685
Italy	2,343-2,345	2,369-2,371
Japan	161.06-161.24	163.34-163.48
Netherlands	2.5617-2.5644	2.5446-2.5472
New Zealand	2.2031-2.2064	2.2210-2.2243
Norway	9.84-9.85	9.81-9.83
Portugal	234.67-234.94	233.42-233.66
Spain	190.42-190.66	189.88-190.12
Sweden	10.13-10.15	10.16-10.18
Switzerland	1.8531-1.8552	1.8538-1.8562
USA	1.5109-1.5116	1.5074-1.5081
ECU	1.2209-1.2220	1.2157-1.2173

FTSE100 Share Index up 62.2 at 3852.7. FTSE 250 Index up 127.4 at 4544.1. Gold down $1.80 at $391.75.

Why Israel's Frustration Boiled Over

In danger of losing his grip in southern Lebanon, Prime Minister Shimon Peres responded with bombers and artillery, write **Barton Gellman** and **John Lancaster**

ON DIRT ROADS cut through rugged hills, overweight armored vehicles taxi Israeli soldiers from base to sandbagged base. Bulked up with extra armor plates against missiles and roadside bombs, the half-tracks strain to pull their loads and look like metaphors for an army bogged down in guerrilla war: muscle-bound, defensive, far less agile than its tormentors in the orchards nearby.

"They know the terrain better," said a sergeant whose Golani brigade has lost seven soldiers this year to the Shiite Muslim militia of Hezbollah, or Party of God. "It's their turf, so they have an advantage."

Israel's long frustration here, in the southern Lebanon "security zone" declared in 1985, accounts in large measure for the outgoing howitzer fire that has half-drowned conversations for the last two weeks at this command post north of Metulla, Israel. Stalemated in a war of attrition on the ground, Israel took to the air on April 11, with bombers and long-range artillery.

Prime Minister Shimon Peres cast Operation Grapes of Wrath as an answer to Katyusha rockets lobbed by Hezbollah at Israel's northern Galilee. But the story of how the offensive began appears to have as much to do with events inside the 328 square miles of Lebanon that Israel rules with a proxy militia called the South Lebanese Army (SLA).

There are many explanations of why the violence burst out of its confinement in the security zone: Hezbollah's growing boldness, Iran's strategic aims, Syria's ire at a diplomatic freeze, Israel's election-year ambitions and fears. Underlying all of them was the instability of the security zone itself, where Israel was in danger of losing its grip.

In a rooftop briefing here the other day, Brig. Gen. Giora Inbar, Israel's commander in the zone, did not even mention attacks on northern Israel when asked to explain the outbreak of the war.

"We started this operation after the situation in southern Lebanon became intolerable," he said. "South Lebanese Army soldiers, Israel Defense Force soldiers and civilian citizens here all over the security zone couldn't go on living under the threat of Hezbollah shelling, bombing and blows to their villages."

When Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982, hoping to strike a death blow to the Palestine Liberation Organization, there was no enemy called Hezbollah. The PLO's state-within-a-state had few friends among Lebanon's Shiite Muslims, and the Shiites largely sat out the war.

But by the time Israel pulled out its forces three years later, Lebanon's Shiite plurality had grown hostile. To keep them at a distance, Israel set up a security zone amounting to about 10 percent of Lebanon.

Today that border strip is ruled by Antoine Lahad, 67, a pompadoured Christian claiming the rank of general who tends to make public appearances in double-breasted European suits. Lahad's 2,400-strong South Lebanese Army, equipped and paid by Israel and supported by 1,000 Israeli troops, is the sole armed force in the security zone save for blue-helmeted United Nations troops. The SLA and its Christian-dominated institutions conscript soldiers, collect taxes, supply utilities and run hospitals and south Lebanon's only jail.

Hezbollah, founded as a shadowy terrorist group, has entered the mainstream of Lebanese politics. Today it holds seats in parliament and runs a network of hospitals and schools. It has its own television and radio stations, whose broadcast antennae have been among Israel's targets in recent days. And it has a military wing that long since took the lead in trying to expel Israel from the security zone.

Israel has said for many years that it harbors no territorial claims on Lebanon and will gladly withdraw from the occupied strip once assured that the border region will not be used for infiltration and rocket attacks. Many Lebanese, even those unsympathetic to Hezbollah's call for strict Islamic rule, regard armed resistance as justified until Israel departs.

"If he occupies part of our country, it is not self-defense," Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri told CNN last week. "So [Israel's] attack on Hezbollah and Hezbollah's attack is in fact a fight between a resistance and the occupation."

"Why can't the Americans understand?" Walid Jumblatt, a cabinet minister and political chieftain of Lebanon's Druze community, asked in an interview. "It's like Vietnam."

One point of resemblance is the ferocity of the guerrilla war. Neither side takes prisoners, as Inbar acknowledged in another interview nearly a year ago. "When there are short-range clashes, either we kill them or they run away," Inbar said.

HEZBOLLAH sets lethal ambushes and deliberately bombards civilian targets, both in northern Israel and Israeli-controlled Lebanese towns such as Marjayoun. Israel — although officials say it does not aim to do so — is so indiscriminate in its use of firepower that it has killed considerably more civilians than Hezbollah. Each side describes its use of weapons as retaliation.

Israel's preference for long-range combat, and Hezbollah's habit of fighting from the close environs of civilians, mean that Israeli and SLA tank and artillery fire often strike inside Lebanese villages, and noncombatants suffer.

There are no reliable statistics, but U.N. peacekeepers and the American-based Human Rights Watch/Middle East have documented numerous examples of "retaliatory shelling" by Israel that killed and maimed Lebanese children and elderly civilians.

Lahad, the SLA commander, explained these incidents to foreign reporters last year by saying that sometimes "a shell goes astray." Uri Lubrani, the former Mossad deputy chief who has run Israel's Lebanon policy for many years, had another explanation: "This is not a tennis match."



Deafening strike . . . An Israeli soldier covers his ears as a howitzer fires at Hezbollah targets PHOTOGRAPH: EYAL WARSHAVSKY

Israel sometimes apologizes in such cases, and occasionally it announces that an officer has been disciplined for careless fire. According to U.N. officials, who log every exchange, Israel also let several cases pass in which Hezbollah rocketed northern Israel in what it said was retaliation for Lebanese civilian deaths.

In July 1993, after the last major Israeli offensive in Lebanon, the United States brokered "understandings" on the conduct of the guerrilla war. Negotiated by telephone by Secretary of State Warren Christopher, in successive conversations with Syrian President Hafez Assad and the late Yitzhak Rabin, then the Israeli prime minister, the understandings remained oral and have never been fully described in public. Their gist was that neither side would target civilians, but Hezbollah interpreted them to mean it could rocket northern Israel if Israeli fire harmed civilians in Lebanon.

Hezbollah, since then, has grown far more proficient and aggressive as a military force. Iran acknowledges its support for the group, which a senior Israeli intelligence officer estimated at $100 million a year.

Hezbollah fighters have an arsenal appropriate for their guerrilla war. Most of their weapons can be carried by hand, and others need only a pickup truck to move. They use night-vision equipment, Sagger antitank missiles, heavy machine guns, 82mm and 120mm mortars, and several variants of the Katyusha rocket, including 122mm models.

During the 1990s, Hezbollah has launched more attacks in the security zone every year, and every year killed more Israeli and SLA troops. In 1994, the last year for which full data were available, Hezbollah killed 21 Israelis and 43 of Lahad's soldiers, compared with 12 and 13 two years before. Another 23 Israeli soldiers died in 1995 and seven in the first quarter of this year.

"Now it's scary," said Eyal Hasid, an 18-year-old Israeli enlisted man on his way into Lebanon. "The Hezbollah is getting better and better."

Israel's technological advantages, while considerable, have not sufficed to silence Hezbollah's small arms, rockets and bombs. Israeli electronic-warfare aircraft used broad-band transmissions to detonate some of Hezbollah's radio-triggered bombs for a while, but then Hezbollah learned to keep the trigger disarmed until an ambush was imminent. Counter-battery radar allows the Israeli army to shoot at Katyusha launch points within seconds of an attack, but Hezbollah now uses homemade timers — typically involving a wristwatch and a motorcycle battery — so that, as U.N. spokesman Timor Goksel said, the fighter is "home watching television" when the rocket is launched.

Moreover, there is strong evidence that Hezbollah intelligence has penetrated Lahad's force. The guerrillas often seem to know where and when Israeli and SLA patrols will come, and they especially like to strike new units as they rotate into the zone.

Along with increasing casualties, a sense of imminent abandonment caused SLA morale to plunge. Israeli-Syrian negotiations were moving throughout 1995 and early this year toward a land-for-peace deal on the Golan Heights that was generally expected here to include an Israeli withdrawal from the security zone. "As far as the Israelis are concerned," said SLA commander Lahad, "they are much more interested in peace with Syria than in the future of Lebanon."

While their Washington talks continued, Assad and Peres both had reason to keep the intensity of the fighting below a boil. But when Peres suspended the talks last month, after a series of terror bombings by groups with leaders in Damascus, Assad lost his incentive to restrain Hezbollah. And Peres, when he considered a new offensive, did not have talks with Syria to protect.

It was in this context that the war of attrition began to heat up in mid-March. During an American-led anti-terrorism conference held March 13 in the Egyptian resort town of Sharm el Sheikh — a milestone of Israeli-Arab cooperation — Hezbollah launched its largest coordinated offensive in years.

Two weeks later, on March 30, Israeli gunners killed two civilians in Yatta. Peres went on television to apologize, trying to tamp the crisis down. But Hezbollah fired a Katyusha barrage, and thousands of tourists canceled plans to spend the Passover holiday in the Galilee.

The same month saw a failed car bombing with 880 pounds of TNT, then a Hezbollah hang glider who aimed for northern Israel but got tangled on a power line and blew up, and a successful suicide attack that killed an Israeli officer in the zone.

Through diplomatic contacts in Tel Aviv and Washington, Peres asked the Clinton administration to intercede with Syria to stop what he saw as a rapidly escalating crisis. Assad, according to officials from both countries, delivered nothing.

Neither Israel nor the United States, according to officials from both countries, wanted an explicit agreement in advance about Operation Grapes of Wrath. Instead they had an unwritten understanding: When Peres stopped asking Christopher to appeal to Syria for calm, it would mean he was preparing to strike.

"We did not want to be criticizing Israel for responding to aggression funded and directed by Tehran with the assent of Syria," a U.S. official said. "We were not going to use the word 'restraint' in our comments, and we were going to give the Israelis some running room."

Israel's security establishment had been itching to step up the fight for months. Lubrani, a craggy former intelligence officer was advising Peres to "give them a walloping and say to hell with it."

PERES is running a neck-and-neck race for reelection on May 29, and the swing vote was thought to be people torn between the hope for peace with the Arab world and fear about Israel's security in the new Middle East. Peres, whose peace credentials were not in doubt, was running on this slogan: "A strong Israel with Peres."

Most analysts agree that while Peres had something to gain from Operation Grapes of Wrath, he had more to lose if he failed to respond to Hezbollah's escalation.

"Even though I'm no great sympathizer of Shimon Peres, I don't believe he did this for the elections," said Tel Aviv University strategist Dore Gold. "I think he wanted to hold the lid on the pot until after the elections, for the simple reason that it's part of his election strategy to demonstrate his good ties to the Arab world."

The trigger came April 8, when a 16-year-old Lebanese boy was killed by a mysterious explosion in Barasheet. Israel described the explosive as an old mine or shell; Hezbollah accused Israel of planting a bomb. On April 9, the guerrillas loosed the deadliest Katyusha barrage into northern Israel in more than two years, inflicting 34 casualties. Israeli television and still cameras recorded the scene when the deputy mayor's wife in Kiryat Shemona was pulled with critical injuries from her burning car.

Israel's diplomatic channels to Washington fell silent. The Clinton administration did nothing to intervene. Two days later, after quietly evacuating children from Israel's northernmost towns, Peres launched Operation Grapes of Wrath.

Oklahoma City Remembers Dead

One year on from the blast that claimed 168 lives, **Lois Romano** witnesses a community still in mourning

THE SILENCE said it all. In a powerful 168 seconds of declared quietude on Friday last week — one second for each person killed in the worst terrorist attack on American soil — the depths of a city's grief were heard at precisely 9:02am Central time.

Thousands of mourners openly wept in the streets of downtown on this profoundly sad day commemorating those who perished one year ago when a 20-foot truck stuffed with explosives blew apart the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building here.

Relatives of the victims, survivors of the blast and rescue workers packed a private service in front of the stark grassy lot where the Murrah building once stood. Leading the nation in a moment of silence, they bowed their heads in prayer and unspoken memories at the precise minute the bomb exploded last April 19. Only the distant wail of an infant could be heard.

"A year has passed since the traumatic shattering of so many lives," the Rev. Don Alexander of the First Christian Church told mourners, many of whom carried framed photos or wore picture buttons of their loved ones. "We saw the face of evil, but we have also seen the face of love and compassion."

Under a glorious spring sun, the name of each person killed in the blast was called out in 10-second intervals, while family members somberly came forward to lay bouquets and wreaths at the site. Many of them then collapsed in tears in each others' arms. For some it was their first time back in a year, and harsh reminders of the devastation — crumbling and boarded-up buildings — surrounded them.

Afterward, amid tight security, bagpipers playing moody Scottish ballads led a long procession five blocks to the Myriad Convention Center for a public service. There, Vice President Al Gore, Oklahoma Governor Frank Keating and Oklahoma City Mayor Ron Norick spoke. Gore called the bombing a "bone-chilling display of hatred" and used the forum to reinforce the administration's anti-crime message.

"In America, terror will not triumph," he told the families to a resounding ovation. "We do not steal precious human lives to express our discontent. . . . America cannot forget and will not forget Oklahoma City."

Family members, who planned every detail of this anniversary, did not want last week's event to be funereal, but more of a remembrance of their loved ones. Still, when 13-year-old George Wesley Jr. got up and flawlessly sang "Wind Beneath My Wings," the sounds of sniffles and sobs echoed throughout the hall. A few minutes later, a large screen flashed photographs of the victims in happier times, saving the 19 children killed for last.



Sad return . . . former deputy Steven Knopp PHOTO: JOHN GAPS

There has been ample talk of healing in recent weeks — from President Clinton, from state leaders, from others looking into the souls of family members and survivors and encouraging them to go on. But last week there were only unfulfilled dreams and empty hearts.

"All I kept thinking about last night was what my daughter was doing on her last night alive — she was all alone," said Marsha Kight, whose daughter, Frankie Merrell, died in the blast, leaving a toddler behind. "You can never put it behind you."

Gore perhaps expressed it best when he said, "Let there be no mistake. One year is a very short time. In the human heart it can be the blink of an eye."

There is no ready-made guide to advise these people on how to act, how to grieve, how to move forward in the face of an inexplicable random act of evil. Many have said in recent interviews that they desperately want closure. They thought it would come with the arrest and indictment of Timothy James McVeigh and Terry Lynn Nichols on murder and conspiracy charges. They thought it would come as plans for a $10 million memorial unfolded recently. And they thought it would come at last week's commemoration. But these events seem to have only kept open the raw wounds.

"There is no magical moment," U.S. Attorney Patrick Ryan, one of the prosecutors in the case, said in a recent interview. Ryan, who has spent countless hours talking to family members, tries to tell them that even justice doesn't hold all the answer for them.

Last year the state department of mental health spun off a special office — Project Heartland — just to counsel those affected by the bombing. More than 3,000 people have received one-on-one counseling. As the anniversary neared, the calls increased substantially. "People who thought they were okay are remembering again," said Rosemary Brown, spokeswoman for Project Heartland. "There's still a lot of anxiety and a lot of anger — anger that they were powerless that day, anger that they can't make it better." Nonetheless, others insist that from tragedy can perhaps come some good.

Danney Goble, who has written six books about Oklahoma, says that prior to the bombing the state had "a very real sense of inferiority." Its roots, he said, go all the way back to the Dust Bowl years and the "Okie" migration from the state documented in the classic John Steinbeck novel The Grapes Of Wrath.

"What Oklahomans have demonstrated to outsiders is that they have strength and resiliency, and this has to give them a sense of pride," says Goble. "It was human response at its best to human tragedy at its worst."

Some of that response came from rescue workers nationwide who last year dropped everything and rushed to volunteer their services in those first numbing days. Last week hundreds returned to revisit friendships forged in crisis. Many even came back with their search and rescue dogs. One woman from California introduced to reporters her Border collie Bella, who was credited with locating three of the bodies buried in the rubble of the building's credit union.

At the end of the convention center service last week, the Oklahoma City Philharmonic played "America the Beautiful" as families filed out of the darkened hall carrying small battery-powered torches. Standing outside, as the crowds disbursed and the media thinned out, many family members seemed sadly aware that they would be left alone again with their grief.

"This was just another step in trying to learn to live without Julie," said Bud Welch, who lost his 23-year-old daughter in the blast. "There has been a lot of attention this week and I've been playing on that for my own therapy. But I know, in the next week, I'm going to have the air let out me."

Flame of Resistance to Military Build-Up

OPINION
Colman McCarthy

WELL-DESERVED acclaim has been given to sociologist Daniel Jonah Goldhagen for his recent book Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans And The Holocaust. It details the complicity of German citizens during the political reign of the Nazis when much of the public accepted the intellectual arguments for the mass murder of Jews.

"Hundreds of thousands of Germans contributed to the genocide and the still larger system of subjugation that was the vast concentration camp system," writes Goldhagen. He states that "the moral bankruptcy of the German churches, Protestant and Catholic" was "extensive and abject." Religious leaders "were men of God second and Germans first." They blessed state violence.

As the main military force that defeated the Nazis, America has been able to position itself since 1945 on the moral high ground and, with furrowed brow, ponder in astonishment why so few Germans protested their government's well-organized barbarity.

If a cold eye is to be cast on Germany's behavior a half-century ago, why not a condemning word and a protesting stance of resistance against the violent policies of the U.S. government in 1996?

What violence?

❑ Congress lavishes the Pentagon with $700 million a day, a sum nearly equal to the military budgets of all other nations combined and 17 times more than the combined budgets of the six nations the Pentagon claims are threats. Also each day, about 38,000 children are dying throughout the world of hunger-related diseases, according to Oxfam International.

❑ The United States is the planet's largest arms merchant, with Commerce and State Department officials roaming the world on trade missions to hustle more customers for the American weapons industry.

❑ Client states include such habitual violators of human rights as Turkey, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Since 1945, uncountable dictators to whom the United States has supplied weapons turned them on their own people.

Differences between Germany's military machine 60 years ago and America's today are obvious. Less so are the similarities. Germany had a complicit clergy, as does the United States today. America's church leaders offer a biblical argument: Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's, to God what is God's. Dorothy Day had an answer for that: After you give to God, there should be nothing left over for Caesar.

The second similarity is how rarely dissent is voiced by ordinary Americans. Normalcy prevails, as if it were rational to have a proposed 1996 military budget $20 billion larger than in 1980 at the peak of the Cold War.

Not all Americans fall into line. This April in more than 50 cities, such groups as Veterans for Peace, the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the War Resisters League have been organizing programs and demonstrations for tax resistance. Last year, according to the National War Tax Resisters Coordinating Committee, a Maine group, some 20,000 patriots who value their government but not its warrior spirit refused to channel money to the Pentagon through the IRS.

They're back this year, again finding it both illogical and immoral to work for peace while paying for war or war preparation.

The IRS labels them tax cheats, which is incorrect. They are happy to pay taxes when the money is for social programs that enhance life, not for the world's most effective killing machine. Those with religious ties argue persuasively that providing money for military people to kill violates the teachings of the world's religions.

For Marian Franz of the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund, a Washington nonprofit, conscientious tax resistance is a religious liberties issue. She has allies in Congress, including Sen. Mark Hatfield, R-Oregon, and Rep. Andy Jacobs, D-Indiana. Each recently introduced legislation — the U.S Peace Tax Fund bill — that would provide legal protection for citizens who want their taxes to be diverted from the Pentagon maw.

The legislation isn't likely to pass in this or the next millennium. Its value may be for historians, ones who will ask how and why so many ordinary Americans in the late 20th century said or did nothing about their government squandering its wealth on militarism.

In this current darkness, a few lights shine. Honorable dissent may be only flickering, but it is still a flame.

Civilian Toll From Mines Demands Swift Response

EDITORIAL

IT SEEMS almost laughable that the Clinton administration is considering renunciation of different sorts of antipersonnel land mines over a span of years extending to 2010. It puts off even the earliest phase for five years — into the next presidency. It separates the United States from those nations, including its closest allies, that are acting unilaterally now to ban the production, use and export of these devilish devices. Worst, though the proposal now being circulated does contain some deployment constraints, it still tends to validate the premise that antipersonnel mines are legitimate and essential weapons. Any other nation will be enabled to shield its own mine usages behind the American example.

If there is something wrong with land mines, then it is worth fixing before the next century. What is wrong is the special character of these weapons. They have a military function; no one can argue that, although plenty of people — among them a whole list of former combat generals that includes gulf war commander Norman Schwarzkopf — believe that they are "not essential" and that their banning would be "militarily responsible." But mines also have a terrible capability to kill civilians after the war is over. Scores of millions of land mines lie promiscuously strewn across the world's former battlefields, destroying lives and economies and communities. More mines are laid every day.

Under pressure brought first by Sen. Patrick Leahy, the Pentagon had embarked on a policy review. It was understood that President Clinton needed to stay in political step with the military in moving toward his stated goal of "eventual elimination." (Antitank mines of a sort usefully deployed against tank-heavy predators such as North Korea and Iraq would not be affected.)

The question then became whether the Pentagon could serve its first responsibility, which is to protect the troops of a global power on high-threat battlefields and in special operations, even while encouraging efforts to outlaw the particular weapons that take an ever-mounting civilian toll.

At Geneva the United States and others are working on some further practical constraints on land mines. A Leahy initiative succeeded in putting into law a one-year American moratorium, starting in three years, on certain mine uses.

But these bits and pieces need to be strengthened into a coherent policy that reflects not just the core military requirements but the full range of military and civilian costs.



Too Little Knowledge a Dangerous Thing

The failure of Japan to fire the imagination of the average American may have economic as well as cultural implications, says **Kevin Sullivan** in Tokyo

ILLUSTRATION: ALISON SEIFFER

AS CHINA lumbers to its feet as the world's greatest untapped market, more American students, business leaders and scholars are aiming starry gazes directly at Beijing, barely noticing Mt. Fuji trying to block their view.

Especially for students, China is more hip than Japan. It's the East's Wild West, unpredictable, romantic and dangerous. Japan is Dad's blue suit: dependable but dull.

Japan may be an economic giant and one of America's most vital trading partners, but it is losing its grip on the American imagination. Fewer young people see it as exotic, more see it as established, yesterday's news, a colossal complex of efficiency that makes relentlessly perfect, boring cars.

"Japan bashing" has given way to what many call "Japan passing." Look at cinema: Tampopo was a huge hit in 1987, but who's been to a Japanese movie lately? China is the hot reel these days. Taiwanese director Ang Lee's The Wedding Banquet (1993) and Eat Drink Man Woman (1994) are the highest-grossing Asian-language films in US history, and Lee was nominated for an Academy Award this year for Sense And Sensibility. Action star Jackie Chan (Rumble In The Bronx), director John Woo (Broken Arrow) and others from China, Taiwan and Hong Kong are storming America.

US tourism in Japan is also declining, falling to the lowest level in nearly a decade. In part, the dwindling tourism can be attributed to Japan's absurd cost of living; compared to the cost of shopping and eating out in Tokyo, Paris seems like an outlet mall. But the slipping interest is made worse by negative stereotypes about the Japanese that still persist in the United States. Americans moving to Japan for business are frequently asked: "Do you want to go there?" Or they are met with a polite, but dismissive, "Oh. That's nice." American business is still rushing to invest in the world's second-largest economy, but the regular folks are losing interest.

That worries political leaders in Washington and Tokyo, which is why President Clinton and Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto put the issue on the agenda for their summit meeting last week in Tokyo. Call it the Max Factor, because the politicos believe the nub of the problem is this: There are not enough Max Shapiros in Japan.

Shapiro is a 21-year-old Middlebury College student spending his junior year at Sophia University in Tokyo. He's studying Japanese language and culture and learning first-hand that American perceptions about this country are often skewed.

"I guess I expected more of an 'us against them' feeling from the Japanese people," says Shapiro, a native of Boston. "But I was really welcomed. Nobody made me feel like I wasn't as good as they were."

The trouble is that Shapiro is a rare specimen. He's one of only 1,700 American students studying at Japanese colleges, compared with more than 45,000 Japanese studying at colleges in the United States. That gap is widening each year, and it is at the root of the astounding lack of understanding between the people of the world's two largest economies.

Although Clinton and Hashimoto focused mainly on critical security and trade issues last week, they also turned the considerable spotlights of their offices on the student exchange imbalance. They announced an increase in the $190 million Japan's Ministry of Education provides in scholarships to foreign students, less than 3 percent of which now goes to Americans.

For Japan, correcting the imbalance is partly a question of pride: It wants to be a serious power that commands US attention. China and the US are butting heads now, Japan knows, but if that ever changes, China could someday overshadow Tokyo in influence and status, at least in Washington's eyes. Former Japanese ambassador Takakazu Kuriyama said last year that, during his four years in Washington, his biggest challenge was not trade or troops, but keeping Americans interested in Japan.

US policymakers fear Japan could grow resentful about American indifference and ignorance and turn more toward Asia, or backslide on hard-won progress on opening its markets. They want Japan to be a partner, not a jilted suitor. Being bashed at least shows passion; being ignored is harder on the heart.

"Our societies and history are so profoundly different that it is literally dangerous not to have our students learn about each other," said US Ambassador Walter F. Mondale, who finds it hard to speak for 15 minutes without mentioning this topic.

Mondale is right. The United States sold Japan $75 billion worth of goods last year, making it the United States' second-largest market, and there are incalculable billions more to be earned here. To be sure, Japan has resisted, and its rigidly regulated markets fall somewhere between closed and frustrating. But Mondale argues that part of the problem is that Americans have never bothered to learn what makes the Japanese tick, and fewer Americans than ever seem interested.

"This is the single most important thing we can do," said Mondale. "Personal relationships between Japanese and Americans are the one thing that will blunt rivalry and support understanding and cooperation. The human underpinnings of our relationship are very thin."

Ezra Vogel of Harvard University, a leading US authority on Japan, said the lack of understanding can translate directly into lost profits and competitiveness for US interests. "American corporations, government and media, at the very top levels, have almost nobody who really understands Japan, and that leads to very bad judgments. Everybody underestimates the importance of this."

PAST cases of misunderstanding are legendary. President Richard Nixon thought Prime Minister Eisaku Sato had agreed to a deal on textile imports when he told Nixon he would "dispose of this in a positive way." In Japanese culture, that means no or, at best, "I'll think about it," which Nixon and his aides learned later to their shock and frustration.

Before entering college, every Japanese child studies English for at least six years, some for nine. The Japanese also are fed a constant diet of American movies, music and fashion. Most have some understanding of US culture and history.

But most Americans can't name more than two cities in Japan, or any Japanese prime minister in the past 50 years. In an oft-cited study put out a couple of years ago, Americans asked to name famous Japanese came up with Yoko Ono (whose nationality is arguably New Yorker), Godzilla (who was born, technically, in the Marshall Islands) and Bruce Lee, the late martial arts star from Hong Kong.

Surveys suggest that Americans avoid Japan because there is simply something about the place that bothers them. A recent study commissioned by the Japanese Embassy in Washington found that there is still a "widespread and deeply ingrained undercurrent of negative sentiment" about Japan among Americans. The survey, which involved interviews with 300 people in focus groups conducted around the United States, concluded that Americans tend to think of the US-Japan relationship in terms of an economic "war" that the United States is losing. The reality is that the US economy is in relatively better shape than Japan's.

The study's author, Robert D. Deutsch of EBR Consulting Inc. in Vienna, found that many Americans don't like Japan because it stirs "feelings of loss for old values and ethics" in the United States. Those interviewed said that Japan reminds them of 1950s America, when crime wasn't so much of a concern, families had two parents and the standard of living was good.

Deutsch said Americans believe things are still that way in Japan, and not that way in America, and they resent it.

Seiichi Kondo, the Japanese embassy official who commissioned the study, believes some of the lack of interest simply results from Americans increasingly looking inward. He also blames much of America's declining interest in Japan on the Japanese themselves.

"Tokyo is a big city, and a lot of engineers come here to study, but Tokyo is not yet a capital that inspires young people in the areas of social sciences, art or music," Kondo said. "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink. We've got to make the water more tasty."

Rachel Lichtig, 20, a junior from Tufts University, is spending the spring semester at Nanzan University in Nagoya. She hears that her friends studying in Europe this year travel on weekends, and eat and drink cheaply. Even with a student discount, the two-hour bullet train ride to Tokyo still costs $200.

There is also, she said, the "immense culture shock" to contend with: "I feel like I can never fit in. I always feel stared at. I live in the farmlands, and I feel like a freak when I walk around, because everybody watches everything I do." Still, Lichtig said she understands Japan better now, and the stay has been invaluable to her planned career in linguistics. Clinton's arrival led the Japanese education ministry to unveil its new efforts, touting new college fairs in US cities, its Internet home page, along with the new college scholarship money announced at the summit. Added to the continued success of JET, the ministry's program to bring more than 2,000 young Americans here to teach English every year, Japan's efforts are growing — if at a modest, measured, Japanese pace.

And there is an encouraging sign from the United States as well. Although the number of US college students studying Japanese has dropped, the number of middle school and high school students learning the language is increasing.

Maybe when they are a little older, Mt. Fuji will look more like a destination and less like an obstacle.

Small Steps Toward a Better Relationship

EDITORIAL

WITH the end of the Cold War, many assumed that economics, not security matters, would define the U.S.-Japan relationship.

President Clinton devoted his first state visit, in 1993, to battering down trade barriers. Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto helped build his career as the trade minister who said no to U.S. demands. But last week's summit in Tokyo was weighted heavily toward security issues.

Both sides now realize that the passing of the Soviet Union has not ended tension in East Asia nor lessened the value of the security tie. The point is not that trade is either more or less important than military affairs, but that free trade and prosperity depend on continuing stability.

Now the two nations have renewed and extended their long-standing security alliance. In response to revulsion over the rape of an Okinawa schoolgirl by three U.S. servicemen, the U.S. military has agreed to consolidate bases and reduce its intrusive presence on that island.

In recent years people in both nations have tended to feel ill-used by the security alliance. Americans have wondered why they should defend Japan, given the trade surpluses it racks up and the peace constitution that prevents it from assisting U.S. forces in return. Japanese have asked why they should put up with the burdens of U.S. bases.

Last week both nations acknowledged that they gain from the alliance. A U.S. withdrawal could provoke a dangerous arms race among Asian nations, perhaps including nuclear weapons.

Given the asymmetry, if not inequality, in the alliance, tensions will remain. To help alleviate them, the United States should take further steps to reduce the resentment its bases cause, perhaps by sharing more facilities with Japanese military and civilians.

Japan must take more steps to open its market and its economy. Its trade surplus, while declining, remains huge, and the freeloader argument will not go away until truly fair trade is established. And it must continue to find new ways, consistent with its constitution and the anxieties of its once-conquered neighbors, to expand its contributions to regional peace. Given the history, that process should not be sudden.

Japan took a small step in the right direction last week, and small steps are precisely what is needed.

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Tribes and Taboos

Jonathan Yardley

ASKING FOR LOVE
By Roxana Robinson
Random House. 275pp. $23

ROXANA ROBINSON takes the title of her second collection of short stories from one about a divorced woman undergoing a heartbreaking emotional estrangement from her teenaged daughter, but she could just as well have taken it from another about a middle-aged woman on holiday in Scotland. Called "Breaking the Rules," it has in common with almost every other story herein a preoccupation with the rules that tribes construct to maintain internal cohesion and order and the ways in which members attempt to alter or violate those rules.

The tribe about which Robinson writes is white, Anglo-Saxon and Protestant. It is no longer fashionable either as material for the power elite or as literary subject matter, with the result that Robinson to date seems to have found only a small readership. This is a pity, for she is a writer of real style and substance whose fiction demonstrates an ancient truth that too many readers prefer to overlook, to wit, that the manners of a tribe much unlike one's own nonetheless can help us understand our own whys and wherefores.

Certainly that is true of the 15 stories collected in Asking For Love. They deal not merely with the making and breaking of rules, but also with clashes between the comfortable familiar and the threatening unknown; with the upheavals and discontents, many of them utterly unforeseen, set in motion by separation and divorce; with the awkwardness of men and women well past the courting age but shoved back into it by marital dislocation; with the powerful yet fragile ties between parents and children, mothers and daughters most particularly.

There is not a bad story in the bunch, and several are exceptionally good. One of these is "Slipping Away," in which a Manhattan woman, prosperous but married to a phlegmatic drip, contrasts her own staid existence with the turbulent one of her Latin American housekeeper, who regularly recounts, in Spanish, the manifold contretemps of her private life. She comes to see English as the language of monotonous stability and Spanish as that of "high energy and powerful emotion." As her own life begins to careen in that direction, she follows its new course with apprehension and excitement: "I felt unprepared and helpless: I could do nothing about any of this. It was alarming, but it was also thrilling. I could feel my whole known, orderly life slipping away. I could feel it slipping into Spanish, right before my eyes."

The long and chilling title story carries "Slipping Away" to the next step. Another woman, in similar circumstances, has left her orderly world. She has divorced her husband and is now bringing a new man into her life. This infuriates her teenaged daughter, who wants everything back the way it was before. The child heaps silence and scorn upon her mother, who responds with sorrow and frustration:

"I could have said something sharp. I could have said Now-see-here, and You-listen-to-me-young-lady. There have been times when I've said those things, and maybe I should have then. But I didn't have the heart. All I could demand from Melissa was the form of love, only courtesy, its husk, and I didn't care about that. If Melissa hates me, I don't care if she's polite. Love is what I want from Melissa, and I won't ask for it. Asking for love is the saddest question in the world, and if you have to ask, the answer is too painful to hear. So I said nothing. It took the heart from me to see her so cold and distant, filled with animosity."


ILLUSTRATION: ANTHONY RUSSO

As that paragraph suggests, Robinson knows that parents — or lovers, or grown children, or spouses, or any mature adults in familiar but painful private circumstances — try to do the right thing even as they cannot swear they know what it is. In the collection's final story, "The King of the Sky," a young mother watches with affectionate disapproval as a friend alternately spoils and over-disciplines her son: "I said nothing to Margaret ... I know that you never tell another mother what to do ... No, we all make our own mistakes; we all act crazily, indefensibly. We are saved by time passing and by miracles, not by the interference of our friends."

So she thinks, but the end of the story, which is truly horrifying, gives her pause. It is no small part of Robinson's understanding of human psychology that even as these self-confident women tell themselves that they must not ask for love or interfere in their friends' lives, we can hear the doubts reverberating: not merely because had they acted otherwise terrible outcomes might have been averted, but because neither they nor we know for certain what is the sure course of action where human relationships are concerned.

In "Mr. Sumarsono," an Indonesian diplomat is invited to visit a WASPy New Jersey household in 1961. The woman and her two daughters subject this gentleman to "an endless, messy meal, full of incomprehensible exchanges," that eventually leads to an "aerial grid of misunderstandings," yet when Sumarsono hauls out his camera and photographs his hosts, something magical happens, and human connections are made when none seem possible. The end of the story, with its suggestion of magic yet to come, is lovely.

But then so is everything in Asking For Love. I admit to a strong partiality to Robinson's work not merely because it is handsomely written and sensitively thought out but because it takes place on territory, both physical and cultural, that I have known all my life. But Robinson's stories aren't merely about tight-lipped WASPs testing the inner edges of social defiance; they're about real people in a real world.

Banking on Human Capital

Reed Ueda

MIGRATIONS AND CULTURES
A World View
By Thomas Sowell
Basic Books. 516pp. $27.50

THIS VOLUME is like a gallery of portraits painted by a master who is adept at revealing the inner qualities of his subjects. The subjects here, however, are not individuals but some of the most prominent national groups in the world: the Japanese, Italians, Chinese, Jews and Asian Indians. The economist Thomas Sowell has created these group portraits to show that these peoples have not only been "state" nations but also emigrant nations. Looking into the interior cultural life of the worldwide communities they built, Sowell finds an explanation for their ability to succeed in foreign lands that is a refreshing alternative to recent depictions of collective human behavior as pre-determined by race, gender, national character, or "civilizations."

Sowell makes the case that historically "constructed" and flexible cultural patterns have acted as the key influence on societies in every part of the world. Moreover, these patterns continued to play a shaping role in the lives of emigrants in the new communities they built in foreign lands. The chapter on German immigrants begins in the Middle Ages; the story of Jewish immigrants begins with the Assyrian conquest of Israel; the account of Japanese immigrants starts with the rise of the Tokugawa shoguns.

But Sowell is ultimately an economist. Unlike most historians of American immigrant groups, he wants his readers to recognize the "importance of creating wealth." His gaze is fixed on the instrumental aspects of culture that yield advances based on material development. What is important about cultures is that they developed a "role as vast accumulations of human capital" in a structured way. Human capital, for Sowell, is more than education, expertise, or skill; it is a set of attitudes and values. "It was not the specific skills brought from Japan which produced the greatest economic success for Japanese emigrants," he explains, "but their more general 'human capital' in work habits, perseverance, social cohesion, and law-abiding patterns of life." He also cites the case of Italian immigrants: "Too proud to take charity, they were not too proud to wear rags and to do the hardest and dirtiest work spurned by others." The primary advantage derived from possession of this type of human capital is that it is transferable to any setting.

Sowell's true subject is not the social history of the remarkable immigrant peoples he surveys but the significance of "cultural capital," the stock of human capital within collective cultures. As migrant peoples have spread over the world, they have elevated themselves and invigorated their host societies by concentrating on creating wealth.

In making this point, Sowell takes a didactic stance. He warns against the distractions that keep well-meaning people from maintaining this path to collective progress. He inveighs against shallow but popular therapeutic policies for creating egalitarian group relations. There is more important business to be attended to than crusades for cultural esteem, for cultural security, for moral transformation, or for social engineering.

For Sowell, immigration has been a very competitive school that teaches lessons about how to be productive to immigrant and native host alike. Cultural competition is a way of acquiring knowledge across group boundaries about what works and does not work to produce wealth. He accepts the inevitability of unequal outcomes: As a result of competition, groups will be distributed in the social order according to their particular abilities to produce wealth. But he argues that cultural competition is good for the so-called losers, whose cultural traits are superseded or discarded.

Evaluating the competition to create wealth is too serious a matter to obfuscate by fears of creating invidious distinctions. Unlike many historians, Sowell does not avoid making blunt assessments of effectiveness. For example, he baldly states that German immigrants "were widely known for their industriousness, thrift, neatness, punctuality and reliability in meeting their financial obligations." He also observes, "In societies where haggling and sharp practices have been the norm, with buyers and sellers both seeking to outdo each other, the Chinese have played such games skillfully."

Sowell tries to steer clear of historical determination by stressing how cultural capital has been fluid, created and re-created. He notes that the Scots in the 19th century emerged from deep underdevelopment by launching a rapid accumulation of cultural capital. In 20th-century America, the assimilation of southern and eastern Europeans provided "some of the most dramatic examples of cultural changes in a relatively short time." And in his examination of the fall of the Roman Empire, Sowell shows how cultural capital can be uncreated by circumstances as well.

This book demonstrates that the history of cultures is the history of their plasticity and transferability. This lesson has been taught by emigrants of many races who succeeded in different lands. It is one that bears re-learning in a time of escalating xenophobia throughout the world.

Hardbacks

Non-Fiction

The White Blackbird: A Life of the Painter Margarett Sargent, by Honor Moore (Viking, $29.95).

A BOSTON Brahmin related to John Singer Sargent, Margarett Sargent led one of those hard-driving Jazz Age lives that, for a while, combined a conventional marriage, social triumphs and an artistic career of great distinction. Over time, though, matters grew complicated: the drinking got serious, then out of control; lovers appeared (of both sexes, including a young Jane Bowles); and, unexpectedly, horticulture replaced painting as Sargent's principal artistic passion.

This biography — written by Sargent's granddaughter — chronicles the life of this conflicted artist and contributes to the ongoing rediscovery of such vital modernist figures as Evelyn Scott, Djuna Barnes and Mina Loy.

The Autumn of the Middle Ages, by Johann Huizinga; translated by Rodney J. Paynton and Ulrich Mammitzch (University of Chicago, $39.95).

HERE is the first full translation into English of one of the 20th century's few undoubted classics of history. For years students in medieval studies courses have carried around paperbacks of The Waning Of The Middle Ages, admiring especially Huizinga's evocative descriptions of the religious and social mania that gripped the 14th century. But, it turns out, that version of the Dutch historian's book was abridged and, on occasion, its forcefulness attenuated; now this monumental work has been retranslated from the best Dutch edition, with some attention to a German translation approved by the author. First published in 1919, the book itself remains a vivid and immensely readable account of late medieval life — and the perfect background resource for admirers of The Name Of The Rose, indeed a key to that work since Huizinga reprints and briefly discusses the Latin "ubi sunt" poem which gives the novel its title.

Howard Hughes: The Untold Story, by Peter Harry Brown and Pat H. Broeske (Dutton, $24.95).

THE life of Howard Hughes seems like a biblical parable of a talented man brought down by self-indulgence in tandem with obscene wealth. This biography suggests that one of the reasons for Hughes's flights of unreality may have been the extent to which so may people around him chose to humor him. There is the matter, for example, of Jane Russell's breasts, which, the authors note, "were to be considered stars in their own right" of Hughes's movie The Outlaw. In a scene where Russell was struggling to free herself from bonds, Hughes noticed that "the outline of her bra was visible beneath her peasant blouse." Engineer that he was, he designed a new kind of bra to solve the problem. Russell found it "ridiculous-looking," but rather than tell him so she wore her own bra with Kleenex between it and the blouse, and Hughes was none the wiser. In his last years, the authors believe, Hughes's aides kept him "drugged and pliable."

GUARDIAN WEEKLY
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Le Monde

Venezuelans forced to swallow bitter pill

Jean-Michel Caroit in Caracas outlines the president's controversial measures to restore economic stability

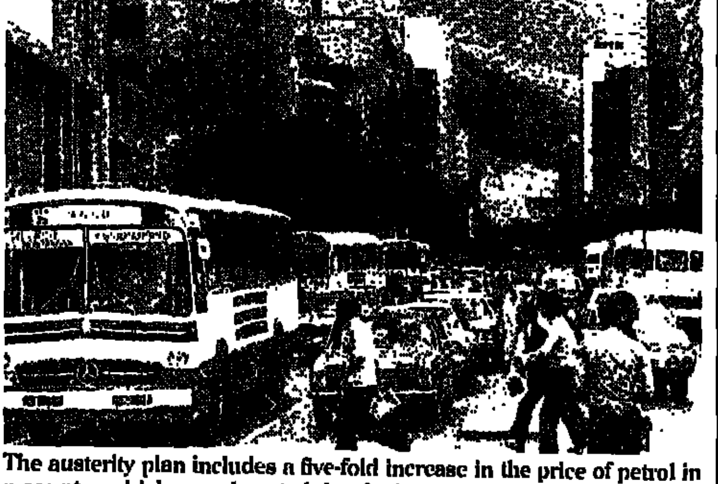
CARACAS newspapers are calling it "the great U-turn". President Rafael Caldera, the 80-year-old Social Christian patriarch of Venezuelan politics and sworn enemy of neo-liberalism, who was elected in 1993 on a populist platform, has reluctantly had to resort to shock therapy in an attempt to stabilise and revive an economy weakened by stagflation.

In a nationwide broadcast on April 15, Caldera announced an austerity plan which looks very much like the one which his arch rival, the Social Democrat Carlos Andres Perez, tried to implement in 1989 — and which Caldera energetically denounced at the time.

The plan aims to absorb the budget deficit which, he said, grew alarmingly in 1994 when the state bailed out a string of ailing banks. Its key measures include a swingeing rise in petrol prices, the lifting of exchange controls (which experts believe will trigger a sharp devaluation of the Venezuelan currency, the bolivar) and a 4 per cent hike in taxes on wholesale sales and luxury goods.

The plan should help towards the signing of an agreement with the International Monetary Fund. "We have had talks with the IMF in a climate of great sincerity and respect," Caldera said. "Multilateral financial organisations understand Venezuela's concern to give priority to the fight against poverty, and I think our conversations will soon come to a satisfactory conclusion."

Caldera admitted that the signing of an agreement with the IMF was a precondition for the re-establishment of confidence in the international financial community. Such an agreement would also enable Venezuela to obtain further credits worth about $3 billion.


The austerity plan includes a five-fold increase in the price of petrol in a country which once boasted that fuel cost less than mineral water

Juan José Marquez, at the wheel of his clapped-out Chevrolet taxi, did not take long to work out the implications of the austerity plan. From now on, a tankful of petrol will cost him five times more than it used to. He has already begun to pass on the increase to his customers.

The five-fold rise in petrol prices is the most spectacular aspect of the austerity plan — although the new price of four-star petrol is still a mere 50 bolivars (15c) a litre, a figure beyond the European motorist's wildest dreams.

In Venezuela, a country that used to boast that its petrol cost less than mineral water, petrol prices have always been an explosive issue. Their sharp rise in February 1989 set off a tidal wave of social disturbances that left 300 dead. For several days now, the spectre of a rerun of those events has haunted the capital.

"I hope nothing happens, but it's better to take precautions," says Maria Concepción, a retired beautician shopping in a Caracas supermarket, her trolley piled high with food.

Crowds of anxious consumers stocking up on essentials "just in case" have taken the supermarket by storm. There are long queues of cars at filling stations because drivers are worried about possible violence. Some are also there just to get one last tankful of cheap petrol.

Although the government has not heeded the suggestion by certain politicians that a state of emergency should be declared, it has taken steps to deal with possible unrest. On the day of Caldera's statement, police patrols were stepped up in Caracas, and the interior minister, José Guillermo Andueza, announced that troops would step in if necessary.

The Caldera government has learnt the lesson of the 1989 riots and made a big effort to soften up public opinion. Seven years ago, on the crest of his re-election wave, then President Carlos Andres Perez suddenly announced an austerity plan concocted by technocrats.

This time, Caldera asked his popular new planning minister, Teodoro Petkoff, to prepare public opinion for the announcement. In recent weeks Petkoff, a former pro-Castroist activist and founder of the Movement Towards Socialism, travelled the length and breadth of the country orchestrating a series of leaks that would, he hoped, help him to "sell" his adjustment plan.

"It's like peritonitis," he explained. "The operation hurts, convalescence is difficult, but it's much worse to leave things as they are. Without economic adjustment, inflation would have risen to 150 per cent."

There is another difference from 1989: the government is introducing accompanying measures to help the poor. It plans to spend a total of $1.75 billion on public transport subsidies, free school meals and aid for old-age pensioners and the jobless.

Because of rampant incompetence and corruption in the administration, many doubt that these measures will be effective, and fear that the inhabitants of the *ranchos*, the slums overlooking Caracas, will simply get poorer. "People aren't asking for handouts, they just want properly paid work so they can eat and feed their children," says Father Matias Camunas, who works in Petare, one of the underprivileged districts of Caracas.

Nothing will soften the blow that the austerity plan will strike at the middle classes. But as one journalist has pointed out, they are too scared of another bloodbath to take to the streets.

Government experts hope that the inflationary upsurge bound to be caused by a devaluation of the bolivar (its rate against the dollar will probably rise from about 290 to 470) will not last more than two months. The fall in consumption that will result from the decrease in consumers' buying power should keep price rises down — always assuming the government does not give in to wage claims which have recently proliferated in the public sector.

Rising oil prices on the international market could not have come at a better time for Caldera. An increase of $1 per barrel means $800 million extra annual income for Venezuela. Continuing privatisation and the opening of oilfields to foreign companies will also help to put the economy back on an even keel.

"Foreign investors are queuing up," Caldera claimed in an attempt to whip up the confidence of his compatriots. But with uncertain times ahead Venezuelans seem to have taken refuge in their favourite pastime, betting on the horses, which last week reached record levels.

(April 17)

Searching for victims of the Balkan war

Rémy Ourdan in Srebrenica

INVESTIGATORS working for the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague last week completed their inspection of 15 sites in the Srebrenica region of eastern Bosnia, where Serb troops executed and buried Bosnian Muslims they had captured when taking the enclave in July 1995.

The tribunal has already charged Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, the political and military leaders of the Bosnian Serbs, with "genocide" and "war crimes" in connection with the Srebrenica massacres.

Experts inspected a warehouse in Kravica, where several hundred disarmed prisoners were killed by machine-gun fire and grenades, then buried in nearby fields. Mladic had promised them they would be treated decently. After the fall of Srebrenica, between 6,000 and 10,000 men went missing, and there is much evidence that Mladic was present in places where massacres occurred.

Tribunal investigators take photographs and videos of each location from every possible angle. When they inspect a mass grave, they analyse the bones and fragments of clothes. They thrust steel rods into the ground, then sniff their tips to see if there is any smell of human flesh.

They pursue their investigations on the basis of evidence obtained sometimes from refugees who witnessed massacres, but more often from survivors who, when mass executions took place, were protected by other people's bodies and later managed to escape. Investigators also rely on satellite photographs published by the United States and examine the reports of journalists who discover mass graves.

It is also their job to establish whether the Serbs have been trying to cover up evidence of the murders they carried out last year. According to reporters accompanying the investigators, attempts had been made to "clean up" at least one mass grave before their visit last week.

Observers are increasingly perplexed by the attitude of the multinational force I-For, which has firmly refused to guard the presumed sites of mass graves. The I-For commander, Admiral Leighton Smith, said the sites would be kept under surveillance by Nato aircraft, which would immediately detect any attempt to dig up bodies.

However, no Nato report mentioned the case of one mass grave inspected by investigators, where perfectly visible traces on the ground showed corpses had been dug up by mechanical excavators. An I-For spokesman said its position was unchanged: troops were not in charge of the security of mass graves, but they did guarantee the investigators' safety.

The tribunal's seven investigators do travel round with an I-For escort and are put up at American bases in the area. Their movements are kept secret until the last moment, so as to reduce the risk of attack. However, they are left to their own devices once they start inspecting the sites of executions or mass graves. Nor do they get any protection when they venture into areas which may have been laid with mines.

"The Americans want to avoid any incidents with the Serbs," says a European officer. "Bill Clinton can't afford that kind of thing during the run-up to the presidential election."

Their next assignment will be carried out in May. Investigators will use heavy equipment to exhume bodies from mass graves in the Srebrenica area. It will probably be impossible to draw up an exhaustive list of those missing, as people trying to escape the enclave were shot and buried in countless different spots.

The operation will, however, have the merit of proving the scale of the massacre, and in particular to the Serb people, who are bombarded by propaganda from Pale and Belgrade, where the warlords that ordered the "ethnic cleansing" of Bosnia-Herzegovina still rule the roost.

(April 16)

Yesterday's man faces a second defeat

Natalie Nougayrède in St Petersburg

RAISA is against the whole idea, but Mikhail Gorbachev, former leader of the Soviet Union, thinks he is in with a chance of becoming Russia's president for a second time, even though pollsters expect him to get no more than 1 per cent of the vote in the June elections.

Oleg Remizov, aged 37, who heads Gorbachev's campaign team in St Petersburg, knows it will be an uphill struggle: "People have forgotten Gorbachev. Too many negative myths have grown up around him. And the media aren't interested. Glasnost should be brought back, so that television starts talking about him again."

What was there to say about Gorbachev? After a moment's hesitation, Remizov said: "They could say that he was a cultivated man, that he thinks in global terms, and that he could end the war in Chechenia — after all he brought the Afghanistan conflict to an end. He's popular in the West, isn't he?"

There is indeed much goodwill towards Gorbachev in the West. He has an image that sells: a photograph of him has been used in an ad for a furniture store. But things are different in Russia. More than four years after stepping down, the architect of perestroika is still identified with "economic chaos", "uncompleted reforms" and "the disintegration of the Soviet Union" — at a time when others are campaigning on the theme of bringing back "Greater Russia".

The man who ended the cold war provokes irritation rather than interest. The general feeling in St Petersburg, a city with a democratic and progressive image, is that he is yesterday's man. When Gorbachev turned up there at the end of March to launch his election campaign, the city's mayor, Anatoly Sobchak (a professed supporter of Boris Yeltsin), refused to see him, and several bosses of local factories prevented Gorbachev from meeting workers.

Later, in the town of Ivangorod on the Estonian border, Gorbachev faced a hostile crowd. Since the break-up of the Soviet Union, Ivangorod has been sliced in half by the Russian-Estonian border.

Gorbachev would like to dispel the feeling among Russians that he was responsible for the break-up of the USSR and to put himself forward as "the only alternative for those who want neither the present régime nor a return to Bolshevik control".

His chances of success are slender. A St Petersburg paper wrote recently: "The services Gorbachev rendered his country have already been forgotten. And he has not yet been forgiven for the mistakes he made. Try again in four years' time, Mikhail Sergeievich!"

(April 12)

A life in the news

Corine Lesnes on Marinette Revillon, an indefatigable local reporter, who was murdered earlier this year

IN THE days when they both worked as reporters for the same small paper in the working-class Paris suburb of Argenteuil, Christiane Delalay often used to say to Marinette Revillon: "You write like Victor Hugo." What reminded her of Hugo was not so much Marinette's style as her quite unstoppable pen.

When a story of strictly local interest came up — even as local as someone's dog being run over or a stray cat being found — Marinette would embark on her investigations with tremendous gusto. She had to find out everything about the dog: if it were a cat, she would often end up adopting it.

She had been a nurse during the last war and never married. At one point she looked after 25 cats, which she would call in to eat at her two-room ground-floor flat in Rue de l'Abbé-Ruellan. As she never cooked and so had no leftovers, she served them tins of petfood kindly provided by the local Rotary Club, whose members had a soft spot for the reporter who never missed any of their annual general meetings.

By the time Marinette retired from journalism at the age of 75, she had reduced her family of cats to a more manageable size. And when she was murdered earlier this year at the age of 84, she was believed to have only one cat, a tiny animal that looked like a kitten but had simply never grown in size. Once, when it was injured, Marinette had managed to sew it up. The cat was never found after her death. Perhaps it bolted after witnessing the unspeakable.

Once she was assigned to a story, Marinette worked indefatigably. If necessary she would get up at 2am to go and see for herself, arriving on her Vélosolex moped in the wake of the police van. She knew everyone, and everyone talked freely to her. The police were not surprised to see her plying her way through suburban streets at night. Often they would drive her back home after she had done her reporting.

Sometimes they even picked her up at home before going to the scene of the crime and making their routine report on the body of the victim or the stolen moped. She would take that opportunity to get them talking so she could keep up with the latest local events.

That was her secret, the lesson she passed on to the young people she talked to at youth-club fêtes, which she covered each year with unflagging enthusiasm. Some of her spellbound listeners were even inspired by her to take up a career in the media. She told them that a good reporter always has to come back from covering a story with at least two lines of inquiry.

Police officers would never have dared lie to Marinette. Although she did not terrorise them, it would probably be accurate to say that she had tamed them. She had a terrier-like persistence. She would drop in at the Argenteuil police station every day without fail, "to see if there wasn't a little something", says Robert Broussard, until recently one of France's most celebrated police detectives and now a prefect. At the time, in 1960, he was still only a low-grade officer in charge of clerical work and keeping the police station's coal stove going.

Broussard spent only a year in Argenteuil but has never forgotten Marinette: "She belonged to a breed of reporters that has disappeared. We would never have presumed to try and pull the wool over her eyes."


Keeping in touch . . . Marinette Revillon with friends and (below) still reporting on local news well into her 70s

He attended her funeral on January 19, even though he was supposed to be at an interministerial committee meeting in Paris. About 1,000 people were present in the church of Saint-Denys in Argenteuil, including the local mayor, a member of parliament and many high-ranking police officers and firemen, all of whom had been shocked by the violence of her death.

Because she worried about missing a good story, Marinette never took a holiday. Any piece of information withheld from her at 9am would be the subject of further questioning by her at noon, and then again at 2pm, until the person being grilled simply gave in.

In those days, gen was more readily available to local reporters. They were still allowed to consult the log-book at the police station; late at night, they would often still be around when officers opened food parcels sent up from the provinces by their families and they would finish their working day at the emergency ward of the local hospital.

The railway network had just been extended and train crashes were quite common. When they happened, Marinette's friend Delalay would go and take photographs. She remembers how victims sometimes had the top of their heads cut off "like a boiled egg". Then there was the case of the leopard that escaped from Ermont Zoo and was caught by the fire brigade. That was the kind of thing that got reported in the paper in the days before housing estates mushroomed in the suburbs.

The legend of Marinette was eventually perpetuated through a kind of "oral tradition", in the words of one inspector. Many years after she had retired, she still came to have lunch at the police station canteen. The police knew she was poor and paid for her meal.

At the age of 84 she was still living in her small flat giving on to a cul-de-sac behind a café in the old quarter of Argenteuil. Through a broken window, it is still possible to see pale floral wallpaper of the kind usually found in cheap old hotels. There is a still life on the wall, and on the floor a pile of unopened newspapers — a sad epitaph to the dead reporter.

When Marinette finished work on a story and wrote her article — in longhand —, she would deliver each story herself, leaping on to her moped and dropping it off at whichever newspaper she was working for at the time, L'Avenir or L'Echo du Val-d'Oise.

She was such a tiny woman (only 1.50m tall) that at first glance all people could see was a crash helmet perched on the moped. Later on, when she was already over 60, she decided to take her driving test and buy a car.

By then she had joined a bigger paper, Le Parisien (which has local editions), and was earning better money. After having worked for more than 20 years as a stringer, without ever being declared as full-time, she finally got her press card.

People wondered if she ever really learnt how to drive: after several accidents, the garage man said her Fiat 500 was a write-off — which it was not — and to everyone's great relief Marinette at last decided to give up driving.

NO ONE knew much about her private life. Like some rather aloof chatelaine, she shrouded her Russian childhood in secrecy. Her grandmother had been first dressmaker at the royal court. Her father was manager of the tsar's country estate.

After the Russian revolution, she and her parents had to flee Ashkhabad, capital of Turkmenistan. That experience explained her virulent and lifelong anti-communism, which led her to wage a campaign against Argenteuil's communist council.

She explained the fact that she never married by saying she had been "let down". Some who knew her well traced her disappointment to the thirties, when Marie-Madeleine Revillon (she had not yet become Marinette) was a young Parisienne who wore hats and silk stockings and consorted with an antique dealer who sported a preposterous aristocratic title.

In 1977 Le Parisien gave her a retirement party. A photograph shows the editor-in-chief on a rostrum. He is clearly congratulating Marinette on her career. But her teeth are clenched: from her point of view, she was being rushed into early retirement.

She was an obsessive journalist who could not kick the habit. She could still be seen at the age of 76 taking the train to Pontoise, where she would hand in her column to L'Echo, the paper founded in 1888 by Victor Paquet, an industrialist who supported Alfred Dreyfus and was fascinated by modernity.

It was L'Echo that published what was to become a world scoop — a report, in its issue dated August 7, 1890, on the death of Vincent Van Gogh at Auvers-sur-Oise.

According to the paper's editor, Jean-François Dupâquier, that kind of story would no longer get into the paper. Nowadays reporters are expected to make do with the handful of "incidents" that police spokesmen deign to pass on to them. The crime rate in the Val-d'Oise *département* is not even published.

"They're trying to hush up everyday delinquency," Dupâquier says angrily. "It's the only subject of conversation in Argenteuil, and people wonder why they're the only ones to talk about it."

Old age eventually caught up with Marinette. She was not able to write as quickly as she used to. She tended to hand in her column late. The editor of L'Echo would say that it did not matter and that he would publish it in a later issue. Then, one day, Marinette stopped writing altogether and settled into the routine of a little old woman living in a run-down suburb.

Marinette ended up not going out any more. In the evening she would fall asleep in front of her television set, with the lights on and the front door unlocked. When the café next door was still being run by Roger, she would sometimes go and sit there for a bit.

Roger knew what kind of person she was. He remembered all those parking tickets she managed to get cancelled through her connections at the police station, and the way she rendered services to readers, interceding on their behalf at the prefecture. She would even plead with examining magistrates on behalf of this or that youngster who had got into trouble with the law.

The Portuguese who took over the café a year ago probably looked down on her. To them she must have seemed just an ordinary and rather uncommunicative old woman who drank nothing but tea. The café owner ordered a few teabags just to cater for her needs.

In the old days, Marinette would have got a story out of the way the café had changed under new ownership: taking on a fresh coat of blue paint and customers of a different kind, men who flashed gold watches, tattoos and mobile phones and stood out against the local habitués, old-age pensioners like Ahmed, Bébert and Olivier. But Marinette had lost her sense of observation.

On January 12, the *patron* of the café invited 40 or so of his mates for a celebration. Later questioned by police, they were cleared of any involvement in what happened that night. The *patron* noticed something suspicious going on in the cul-de-sac. He did not dare go into Marinette's flat, but he did call the fire brigade.

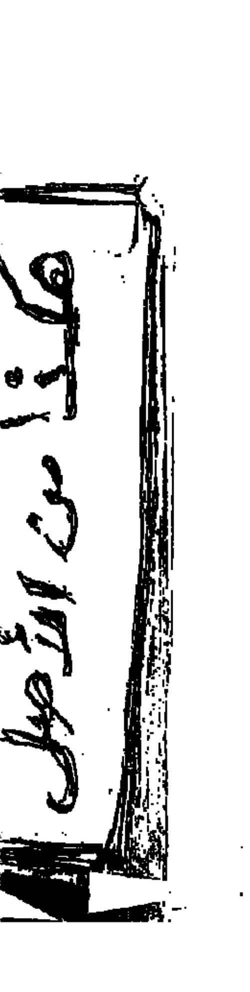
The old woman was still breathing when help arrived. She was kneeling as if she had been tortured. Her ribs were broken and her face slashed. And scattered all around her there were whole handfuls of white hair. The police found her television set abandoned a few hundred metres away.

They said they thought the murder had been committed by a drug addict desperate for cash. They promised to pursue the case vigorously, but more than two months after the event, and despite Marinette's excellent relations with the force, they have made no headway.

Rushed to Argenteuil hospital, Marinette finally died at 2am, victim of a particularly vicious irony of fate.

(March 24-25)

Le Monde
Directeur: Jean-Marie Colombani
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An American in Bath

Lucy Hodges meets the American chief of Bath University, who is intent on US-inspired reform

IS HIGHER education in Britain suffering from galloping Americanisation? The question, so vexing to so many who link rising student numbers with falling standards, doesn't faze Professor David Vandelinde, the American vice-chancellor of Bath University, and the first American to be headhunted from across the Atlantic to run a British higher education institution.

Of course there's a connection between more students and lower standards, he says, gazing serenely over the rain-sodden hills around Bath from his plush v-c suite. "It doesn't take a rocket scientist to detect that if you dip lower into the pool of applicants you're going to have weaker students on average than if you didn't."

What matters, according to Vandelinde, who has three degrees from Carnegie-Mellon University, the hi-tech private institution in Pittsburgh, and who was engineering dean of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore for 15 years, is not whether the quality of the intake has slipped a bit but whether students are given the opportunity to acquire a higher education. Any industrialised country wanting to survive in today's fiercely competitive global economy needs to educate as much of its population to as high a level as possible, he thinks.

The big question, if one accepts the American way, is how to fund a 30 per cent participation rate in higher education, which is what the UK has today. When Britain was putting only an élite 6 per cent through higher education in the 1960s, cost was not an issue. Today it is.

Professor Vandelinde, aged 53, is careful to sound as positive as he can about his adopted country. But he's pretty amazed no one complained about the way higher education used to be funded — with so much being spent on so few. The challenge today is to find new ways to finance a larger system, one which includes the old polytechnics and many more students.

And that means keeping the high quality of the British system where possible, particularly the close relationship between students and lecturers, but finding more cash through antipodean or US funding arrangements. The great merit of the Australian income-contingent loan repayments, whereby graduates pay back the cost of their higher education in relation to income, is that it is fair, provides access and is easy to understand. By contrast, American funding of students is hideously complicated, a patchwork of schemes that has evolved over the years. "But we should look at what goes on in North America too," Vandelinde argues.

As an American who was educated by and taught in two of the most élite private universities, Vandelinde is a bit embarrassed about the sky-high fees charged by the top US universities — more than $100,000 a year for a place at Harvard, for example. He believes, however, in institutions charging for all or part of the cost of higher education, because that is the only way a mass system of higher education can be financed.


David Vandelinde: 'To expand access . . . people who benefit are going to share in the cost'
PHOTOGRAPH: GARRY WEASER

"If we're going to continue to expand access, we're going to have to go to a system where the people who benefit are going to share in the cost." That has to be done in an equitable way, he believes, which means students paying according to their ability to pay. What the British don't seem to understand is that the prestigious private universities in the US really do take students regardless of their ability to pay, he says.

They do so by stitching together financial packages — a mixture of loans, grants, scholarships and jobs on campus — and they charge more to those who can pay to support those who can't.

At Bath, where he has been in charge since 1992, Vandelinde has been busy making changes. A former college of applied technology, Bath was slow to adopt modular degrees, but Vandelinde has pushed that development along. In recent years the university has been building its research base.

On the administrative front he has introduced better keeping of financial records "so we know what different things cost", he says. There has been a gradual restructuring of the central administration, and a continuous watch on the quality of teaching and research. "We have been quite aggressive in persuading people to take early retirement," he says.

The university is currently undergoing a big physical redevelopment costing $75 million, which includes new sports facilities, as well as renovated halls of residence and new buildings for the chemistry and chemical engineering departments. The money came from the National Lottery, the Higher Education Funding Council and the private sector. Vandelinde thinks his job will increasingly be concerned with fund-raising.

All of which shows how far a British university has gone down the American road. Will Vandelinde stay in his adoptive country? No, he says. "It would not be in my interests or those of the university for me to stay for ever." A committed baseball fan, Vandelinde expects to return to the United States one day, but does not know whether that will be in two to three or five to six years' time. When he feels homesick he can watch CNN and major league baseball on his satellite TV. For now, he has a job to do in Bath.

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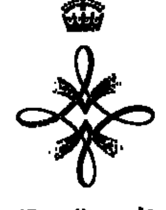
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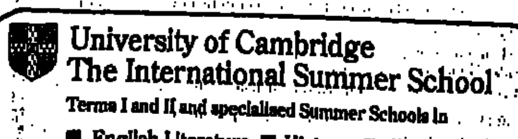
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* assisting in the developing of appropriate training materials and presentation techniques for the programme ensuring maximum customisation.
* developing appropriate selection criteria and liaising with member States to determine which people should be invited to attend courses.
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The Requirements

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ENQUIRIES

Further information may be obtained from Mrs Caroline Moore, Department of Politics, University of York, Heslington, YORK YO1 5DD (tel: 01904 433561, fax: 01904 433563). Application forms may be obtained from the Graduate Schools Office, University of York, Heslington, YORK YO1 5DD (tel: 01904 432146).

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Terms of Reference:

1. Co-ordinate and partly implement the SSD's programme of applied research and advocacy in CBNRM, in collaboration with other members of the SSD team and the Living in a Finite Environment Programme.
2. Contribute to the training of SSD staff and University of Namibia students in applied research and CBNRM related subjects.
3. Contribute to the co-ordination and development of SSD's Rural Poverty and Resources Programme, within which the CBNRM activities fall.

Qualifications: An MA but preferably a Ph.D in a relevant social science discipline and at least five years' proven experience in applied research, training and/or development work in CBNRM or a related relevant field. Fluency in written and spoken English. Relevant experience in Southern Africa will be an advantage.

Interested candidates should address a comprehensive curriculum vitae, including the names and addresses of three referees.

Information should be forwarded to Ms J Drotsky at the SSD, MRC, UNAM, Private Bag 13301, Windhoek, Namibia. Further details can be obtained from her at telephone 09-264-61-206-3052 or fax 09-264-61-206-3050; or from Dr Ben Fuller at telephone 09-264-61-206-3699 or at the abovementioned fax number.

Closing date for applications: 15 May 1996.



The master of his own fortune

Stavros Niarchos

FOR HALF a century the tankers, carriers and supertankers of Stavros Niarchos, who has died aged 86, have been crossing the globe. In an age when merchant shipping is run by grey executives, Niarchos's flamboyant style — his surname means "shipmaster" — set him apart. His fleet, which 10 years ago was estimated at 3 million tonnes displacement, represents only 15 per cent of his assets. The other 85 per cent is tied up in shares, gold, property and art. He is believed to have been the largest private investor in Citibank, and he created enough wealth for 10 generations of his family to live in opulence. But it was not always like that.

His father, Spyros Niarchos, and his mother, Eugenie Coumandaros, were from Sparta in Greece, and had spent some years running a sweet shop in Buffalo, New York State. Their first child, Maria, was born in the US, but Stavros arrived in Greece, and missed American citizenship. His early years were happy. He went to a private school, and although by no means rich, his family was comfortably off until 1923, when everything collapsed. Stavros Niarchos was 14 when his father went bankrupt. Scarred by the spectre of poverty, he determined never to be poor again.

In 1928, he was employed as an office assistant by his rich merchant uncles, the Coumandaros brothers, who were grain traders. A curious mixture of playboy and hard worker, Stavros was an exceptional analyst who could predict economic trends. He persuaded his uncles to buy their own ships, which led to a 35 per cent saving on grain importation costs.

Just before the second world war, when his uncles dissolved their partnership, Niarchos acquired a 60 per cent share and operating control in one of their ships, the Maleas, and insured the vessel against war risks, when rates were still low. The $60,000 ship was bombed by the German air force in Antwerp harbour. The insurance compensation was nearly $1 million. Thus did the the war usher Niarchos into the shipping world.

Conventional wisdom had it that a slump would follow the end of the war. Stavros Niarchos thought otherwise; he was convinced that fortunes lay ahead for shipowners. His friends thought he was crazy. He placed orders with brokers in New York and London to buy anything that would float and, together with his compatriots Stavros Livanos and Aristotle Onassis, embarked on a huge shipbuilding programme.

There was no sustained downturn, and global reconstruction demanded more tonnage than ever before. Like Onassis, he knew the world economy would be based on oil and its transportation, and their competition in this field became legendary. Both, using flags of convenience, broke through into a new financial era, introduced supertankers, and amassed vast fortunes.

In 1947, Niarchos became Onassis's brother-in-law by marrying his wife's sister, Eugenie Livanos, daughter of Stavros Livanos. The Greek word for men who marry sisters is *batzanakia* — traditionally, they should behave like true brothers. Niarchos and Onassis did not. Their intense business rivalry now spilled into a darker conflict.

Niarchos and Onassis were indicted by the US Justice Department in 1953 for violations of the 1946 Ship Sales Act. They were accused of getting control of tankers prohibited from sale to foreigners. Niarchos's entire American operation was under threat and, if found guilty, he faced a stiff prison sentence. But while Niarchos remained



Niarchos: shipping magnate whose fortune was built on a shrewd analysis of the post-war demand for oil PHOTO: PIERRE BOULAT

in London, Onassis returned to the US to face his sealed indictment. As a result, the Justice Department was obliged to make both indictments public. Niarchos did not set foot on American soil, but sent his British lawyer to negotiate with the US Assistant Attorney General, who was dealing with Onassis face to face. A deal was finally worked out, but Niarchos was later sued by the US government again for breaching the agreement. Consequently, he transferred his operations to Europe.

Meanwhile, Niarchos felt severely threatened by the "Jeddah agreement" between Onassis and the Saudi Arabian monarch, by which Onassis was to supply 500,000 tons of tanker shipping to set up the Saudi Arabian Maritime Company (Samco), which would get priority rights on Arabian oil shipments. Had the deal materialised, Onassis, within a decade, would have had a strategic monopoly on the annual transport of more than 45 million tons of Saudi oil. This threatened not only Aramco, the consortium dominated by four major American oil companies, but US strategic policy. It also threatened Niarchos. The time had come to take action.

He offered Robert Mayhew, a former Federal Bureau of Investigation agent and sometime associate of the reclusive multi-millionaire Howard Hughes, an advance to scupper the Saudi agreement, which, as his lawyer put it, was a threat to American foreign interests. Thus was Onassis's deal undermined, through intense pressure put on the Saudis.

With six residences spread around the world, Niarchos had plenty of wall space to fill and derived "aesthetic satisfaction" from collecting paintings. "I like living with them," he said. "They make my surroundings and my life more pleasant." He developed one of the world's outstanding private collections, acquiring the actor Edward G Robinson's collection, El Greco's Pietà, four paintings by Gauguin, four by Cézanne, four by Degas, nine by Renoir, 13 by Van Gogh and outstanding works by Toulouse-Lautrec, Goya, Matisse, Delacroix and Corot.

Niarchos was an excellent swimmer and yachtsman, and a good hunter. He loved Ascot and the racing world, and became one of the leading owners and breeders of racehorses in Europe.

Tall, slim, with the gaze of a hawk, a protruding, bony, aristocratic nose and a seductive charm, he was apparently irresistible to women. He married five times. In 1930, his first wife was a Greek admiral's daughter — a short-lived affair, ending in divorce. Eight years later, he took a second wife, a diplomat's widow, but this marriage also ended in divorce.

His 1947 marriage to Eugenie Livanos produced four children. He divorced her to marry briefly the daughter of Henry Ford II, Charlotte, with whom he had a daughter, but he returned to Eugenie, who died in Spetsopoula in 1970, perhaps from an overdose of barbiturates. Rumours at the time suggested it was not "suicide" as claimed. His last marriage was to Tina Livanos, Eugenie's sister and an ex-wife of Onassis. Tina died in October 1974.

Niarchos will be remembered by those who knew him for his sense of humour, generosity and hospitality.

Aliki Roussin-Croney

Stavros Spyros Niarchos, shipowner, born July 3, 1909; died April 16, 1996

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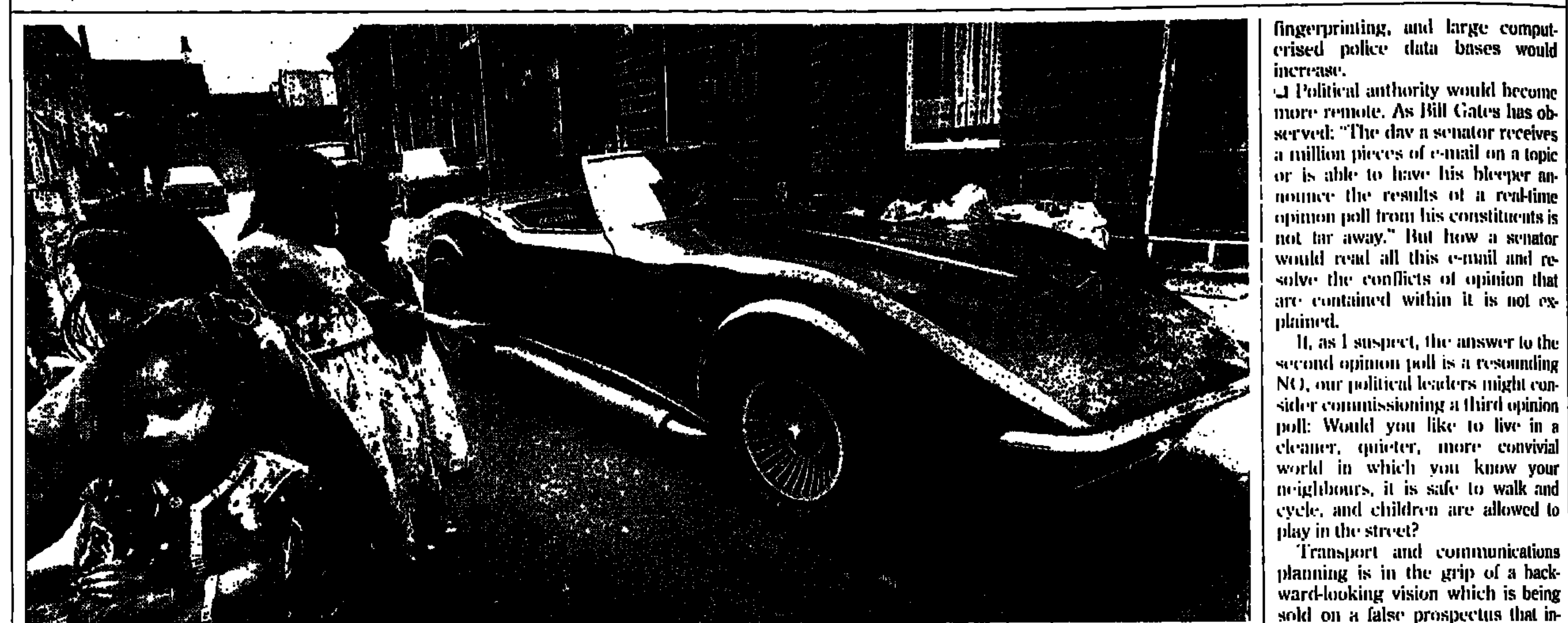
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Baby, you can drive my car . . . Fun for some, but it's a dream not everyone can share

PHOTOGRAPH: DON McPHEE

On a fast road to nowhere

Will cars and air travel for all really improve our lives? **John Adams** predicts social and ecological devastation

LAST MONTH I flew to an OECD conference on sustainable transport in Vancouver where an energy expert told me I'd used a tonne of aviation fuel getting there and back.

The conference provided much balm for environmentalist guilt. The high points were a paper about a "Hypercar" — which would do over 300 miles to the gallon, with virtually no emissions — and a video conference in which a man told us that electronic mobility will increasingly replace physical mobility.

These points exemplify the worldwide search for technical fixes to the environmental problems caused by transport. The promise is that alternative fuels will allow us to travel without fear of running short of energy, assaulting the ear, or poisoning the air. Clever electronics will produce "intelligent" vehicles and highways that will increase the capacity of our roads and airports. And the "need" to travel will diminish as we communicate more electronically.

It is a promise that most politicians find irresistible. Twenty-five years ago, Anthony Crosland summarised perfectly the politician's view of the transport problem: "My working class constituents," he said, ". . . want cars, and the freedom they give on weekends and holidays. And they want package tour holidays to Majorca, even if this means more noise of night flights and eating fish and chips on previously secluded beaches . . . [and] the affluent middle classes want to kick the ladder down behind them."

Crosland's ladder has now been extended to the whole world. China's tiny car population is doubling every three or four years. China believes that every family should own a car. If the whole world succeeded in reaching the top of this ladder there would be 10 times more cars in the world.

Both the Labour and Conservatives parties want Britain to reach the top of the car ownership ladder but the top of the ladder of air travel disappears into the clouds and faster still is the growth of electronic mobility. Here the statisticians cannot keep up, but it is widely agreed that the doubling time of traffic on the Internet is less than a year.

Where will it all end? Most politicians are slaves to opinion polls, and transport policy worldwide is driven by an implicit opinion poll: "Would you like a car, unlimited air-miles, and all the computer facilities enjoyed by computer moguls like Microsoft's Bill Gates?"

At present, most people have never flown and do not own cars or computers. So the answer to this question, everywhere in the world, is overwhelmingly yes. And these "yes" replies are driving policies and research agendas in rich countries and poor countries alike. This suggests a second opinion poll which, as far as I am aware, has never been conducted: Would you like to live in the sort of world you would get if everyone's wish were granted?

For such a poll to yield meaningful answers there would need to be agreement about what such a world would be like. It would probably be polluted, noisy and congested. But, assuming technology will solve these problems, what else might we expect?

- It would be a polarised world. About a third of the world's population will never be old enough or fit enough to drive and their disadvantage will increase as car dependence increases. They will become second-class citizens, dependent on the withered remains of public transport or the goodwill of car owners.
- The world would become one continuous suburb. The traditional city, built for people not cars, could not exist. The last unspoilt islands and wilderness areas would be spoiled.
- Geographical communities would be drained of their social content and reliant on CCTV and neighbourhood-watch. People with similar interests and life-styles would commune on the Internet or meet at conferences and vacation resorts.
- Travel opportunities would be destroyed. The cultural and linguistic diversity in the world would be obliterated by tourism and the hegemony of English on satellites and the Internet. Our sense of place would disappear, in a world obsessed with making it easier and cheaper to "get there".
- Fragile ecosystems would be destroyed. The provision of parking and road space for more than 10 times as many motor vehicles would require paving much more of the world. The remaining wilderness areas would be chopped up into ever smaller parcels — too small to support rare species.
- Street life would disappear. The scale would defeat pedestrians, and traffic would make cycling too dangerous. Children would become captives of the family chauffeur.
- Law enforcement would become Orwellian. CCTV surveillance, DNA fingerprinting, and large computerised police data bases would increase.
- Political authority would become more remote. As Bill Gates has observed: "The day a senator receives a million pieces of e-mail on a topic or is able to have his bleeper announce the results of a real-time opinion poll from his constituents is not far away." But how a senator would read all this e-mail and resolve the conflicts of opinion that are contained within it is not explained.

If, as I suspect, the answer to the second opinion poll is a resounding NO, our political leaders might consider commissioning a third opinion poll: Would you like to live in a cleaner, quieter, more convivial world in which you know your neighbours, it is safe to walk and cycle, and children are allowed to play in the street?

Transport and communications planning is in the grip of a backward-looking vision which is being sold on a false prospectus that invites individuals to imagine the world as it is now but with themselves having access to the opportunites currently enjoyed by a small élite.

OF COURSE transport and communications planners alone cannot create the world described in the third opinion poll. But they can create conditions which will make such a world impossible. In a congested, polluted world, short of energy, their efforts to make transport cleaner and more efficient should, naturally, be welcomed — but only if these efforts are made in the context of policies that give absolute priority to those forms of land use and modes of transport — walking, cycling and local bus services — that promote a human scale of living.

Present priorities are fast creating a bleak, dangerous, alienated, polarised and dehumanised world.

Technology has an important role to play in getting us out of the mess we are making for ourselves but it is currently being deployed in a way that is making things worse.

Waiting in Vancouver airport for my plane back to London, I met a man who was flying to Toronto. He was going to play bridge with people he had met on the Internet.

John Adams is a reader in geography at University College, London. The complete version of his OECD paper will be published in the June issue of World Transport Policy and Practice

Spanner in the works

Camilla Berens reports on Britain's New Luddites, who are marching to a different tune to their American counterparts

ONE Saturday last month, the citizens of York were treated to an unusual sight: a group of activists attacking a Volkswagen Polo with a large inflatable hammer. The car had been put on trial, passers-by were told, and because it had been found guilty, it was being punished — Luddite-style.

The trial was held by a group calling themselves the New Luddites. Their aim, they said, was to recreate the original Luddite activity of dragging machinery into the market place and putting it on public trial to establish if it was beneficial to the "common good".

"The point we were trying to make", says Jim Thomas, a history and English undergraduate at York university, "is that, contrary to popular belief, the Luddites weren't self-serving vandals but great fighters for justice. They weren't against all technology, just against machines that threatened their livelihoods and environment." The trial had particular significance. It was held at York Castle, where 14 of the original Luddites were hanged for machine-breaking in December 1812.

The New Luddites are the latest off-shoot from the latest tide of DIY activism. Although dismissed as "single-issue campaigns" by some politicians, the issue connecting all these groups is concern over the erosion of democracy and lack of accountability — whether parliamentary or corporate. Whatever the issue, DIY radicals are intent on reclamation, whether it's Reclaim The Streets — creating temporary car-free zones — or the Land Is Ours — for greater community involvement in land development. It was almost inevitable that a group would form to address the accountability of "the scientific élite".

"I think it was only a matter of time before the whole area of technology was addressed," says Jim Thomas. "The anti-roads protests raised the issue of car technology, and so much has spun off from that. People are thinking, 'Well, if we can change the Government's line on cars, perhaps we can change their approach to other forms of technology as well'."

In America, the neo-Luddite movement is tapping into a growing irritation with the over-hyped information revolution and the desire for technology-free lifestyles. This spirit is characterised by Kirkpatrick Sale, a writer and lecturer who has gained notoriety for smashing up computers with a sledgehammer at his lectures.

The New Luddites' British founder is an anonymous figure who, like a number of other activists, is known only as Ned (or Eliza) Ludd, the original Luddites' fictitious leaders. This neo-Ned is keen to stress that the inspiration did not come from the States but from a land occupation held near St George's Hill in Surrey last spring. "With all the talk about the Levellers and the Diggers, it seemed obvious to use the Luddites to highlight the need for increased public participation in the control of science," he explains.

Although he says he was impressed by Sale's book, Rebels Against The Future, he distances himself from his counterparts in America. "Sale's book is great for popularising the idea of Luddism and putting it in a modern context but that's as far as it goes," he explains. "I get the feeling that most of the American neo-Luddites are more concerned with turning their back on modern technology than turning it to the common good."

Sale wrote his book on a 15-year-old typewriter rather than a word processor. However, the New Luddites of Britain say they are happy for their message to be spread on the Internet. Although "Ned" grows his own

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Tim Radford on the Earth's inability to continue supporting a population with 90 million more mouths a year to feed

Why meat will soon be off the menu

THE average human in a lifetime consumes 75 tons of water, 17 tons of carbohydrates, 2.5 tons of proteins and more than a ton of fats.

The world this year will acquire 90 million more people, each of whom will require the same rations of water, carbohydrates, protein and fats. But when the year began, world grain stocks were lower than ever before: there was food for only another 48 days in the cupboard.

The future looks largely vegetarian. Economists tend to think of food in terms of grain: for them, beef is simply so much arable land that cannot be used for crops. Food crops need sunlight, topsoil, freshwater and effort.

Cattle are especially wasteful — it takes 790kg of plant protein to turn into 50kg of beef protein. But all animals are expensive. In 1979, the United States fed 145 million tons of grains and soybeans to livestock and got back only 21 million tons in meat, poultry and eggs.

Sunlight is the only part of the lunch that is free. Topsoil — a mixture of soil, humus and microbes — is expensive stuff. It takes about 500 years of weathering to turn rock into an inch of topsoil. In general, the deeper the topsoil, the heavier the yield, but even this depends on the right nutrients at the right time. To get the best out of a crop, farmers usually need nitrogen, or potash, or phosphates, or all three. These have to be found, and then delivered to the crops, which requires energy, usually in the form of oil.

Then there is water: different crops have different needs. Groundnuts do quite well in arid climates. On the other hand it takes 175 gallons of water to produce one pound of corn grain. So for the past 6,000 years farmers have been engaged in a form of slow genetic engineering: continuously selecting crops that best suit local soils, water supplies and climates. But even this has accelerated a race with other creatures: funguses, wilts, blights, locusts, eelworms, weevils and wild oats.

Farmers not only have to keep battling against diseases, predators and competitors, but they have to keep selecting new varieties with new resistances to increase yields.

In the 1960s the process became intensely scientific: the "green revolution" devised heavy cropping ears of rice or wheat on short, fast-growing stems which required fertilisers supplied by tractors and irrigation schemes backed by big banks. For a while, food supplies seemed to surge ahead of population growth. Countries like India and Indonesia became exporters of food, China became self-sufficient, huge agri-providers in the US sold their surplus to up to 120 nations.

But the "green revolution" has wilted. The first limitation is on the sun itself: the most efficient plants cannot convert more than 2 per cent of solar energy into carbohydrates or protein, and genetic engineering is unlikely to make them do any better. The second limitation is in oil and fertilisers: between 1945 and 1995, oil use by US farmers increased fourfold and crop yields increased threefold, but the world's oil reserves are expected to run out in 50 or so years. The other thing likely to run out very soon is the supply of phosphate. This is quite often guano: millions of years of bird droppings turned to rock. World phosphate use has been rising since 1950 by 4 per cent per year to 150 million tons a year. The US Bureau of Mines believes there is about 34 billion tons of phosphate rock left to be quarried. At present growth rates, this will run out in 55 years.

There is worse to come. The land available for agriculture is dwindling. This is, in part, simply because of industrialisation and the growth of the cities, in part because of pollution, and in part because of wasteful use of farmland. Badly designed irrigation schemes have increased salt levels in the soil. Or they have taken so much water from lakes and rivers that whole regions have been turned into deserts. The Aral Sea in the former Soviet Union is a classic case. Estimates vary, but one guess is that every year an area the size of the Republic of Ireland simply becomes useless.

But there is an even bigger problem. Last year a team at Cornell university calculated that soil erosion was now costing the planet $400 billion in direct damage to agricultural land and indirect damage to waterways and human health. Each year, 75 billion tons of soils are washed away by rains and floods or blown away by winds. Eighty per cent of the world's croplands suffer moderate to severe erosion. In places — Europe and the US — where land practices are good, farmers lose 17 tons of topsoil every year from every hectare. In Africa, Asia and South America, the figure is 40 tons a year. On the steep slopes of cassava fields in Nigeria, losses have been measured at 220 tons per year; in parts of Jamaica, 400 tons a year.

Even with modern technology, crop yields are reaching their limit

More than soil is lost. In a hectare of good farm soil there is likely to be a ton of earthworms, a ton of arthropods, two tons of bacteria, algae and protozoa and more than two tons of fungi, all of which recycle the nutrients so that plants can use them. Erosion at this rate is already hitting productivity.

But this year a group of scientists at Stanford university in California looked at the global balance sheet and discovered something even more alarming. Humanity — which has increased from one billion to almost 6 billion in 200 years — may soon be running out of water *(see right)*. The Stanford team found that humans — and their crops, farm animals and forestry plantations — were already using one fourth of all the water taken up by plants. The other 10 million or more species on the planet had to share what was left.

Given that there is a limit to water supplies, topsoil, energy and fertilisers, there is only one route left. This is in genetic engineering: taking useful genes from one variety or even species and transferring them to another. Scientists are already doing this to make crops more pest-resistant, or disease-resistant, or frost-resistant, and there is a world-wide hunt for genes which can be transferred from arid-zone or salt-marsh plants into crop plants to make them grow in wasted soils.

BUT THERE, too, is a catch: in order to provide food for a swelling global population, farmers have been selecting only the most efficient varieties, and settlers have been clearing wild regions to create new farmlands. This means that old varieties and wild species of plants are disappearing everywhere — and these wild plants and primitive cultivars are just the plants most likely to hold the genes scientists have been looking for.

Finally, agronomists are left with the pressures of growth itself. As nations like China industrialise, the amount of farmland available dwindles. As living standards in China rise, tastes change. The Chinese, too, want beef and beer. So grain prices rise. But beef may soon be a thing of the past for most people. Right now the US diet is made up of 31 per cent animal products. With even a 1.1 per cent annual population growth rate, the number of mouths to feed in the US will double by 2050. Right now, each American has 1.8 acres of cropland to feed him or her — and provide $155 worth of food exports each year. By 2050, each American will have to live off 0.6 acres per capita. The US diet by then will be 85 per cent vegetarian.

When the taps run dry

WATER supplies over much of the world could be in trouble, according to a recent study in the US journal, Science. Humans are already using more than a quarter of all water that falls on the ground and evaporates, and more than 50 per cent of accessible water that drains through rivers and streams.

Scientists warn that although new dams could increase the world supply of water by about 10 per cent in the next 30 years, that won't solve the problem. The number of people needing the water will increase by 45 per cent.

Three scientists at Stanford university, California — Sandra Postel, Paul Erhlich and Gretchen Daly — point out that two-thirds of all the planet's fresh water is locked up in the ice-caps. About 10 million cubic kilometres of it is in the atmosphere, rivers, swamps, aquifers, rocks and forests, but most of this is not really on tap.

Animals and plants can only reach water that is evaporated by the sun and falls again as rain. Some runs off to the sea, some is absorbed by life in a process called evapotranspiration. Humans account for about 26 per cent of this total: the rest is shared with other life.

Distribution has always been a problem, even where there is plenty of running water. Sixty per cent of the world's population lives in Asia, but gets only 36 per cent of the water that fills rivers and lakes. Fifteen per cent of the world's fresh water flows down the Amazon, but only about 0.4 per cent of the world's population can reach it. In North America and Eurasia, most river flow is through tundra and into the Arctic regions.

The guess is that by 2025, with 350 new dams a year for the next 30 years, water engineers could add another 1,200 cubic kilometres to the available supply. With the water already stored, and the estimated run-off down rivers, there might be a total of about 13,700 cubic kilometres a year available by 2025. By then, humans could be demanding 70 per cent of that.

However, humans can no longer regard water as available on tap: as scientists are repeatedly pointing out, it is one natural resource for which there is no substitute.

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organic vegetables and uses trains and a bicycle as his main source of transport, the British Luddites, he says, are more concerned with reclaiming democratic control of science and technology than lifestyle posturing. "The Government has made it clear that the key aim for developing new technology is wealth creation. Increasingly, science PhDs are done in direct collaboration with multinational corporations. All the ethical decisions are in the hands of an unaccountable élite. The public has no say and no way of ensuring that a new gadget or process is for the common good," he says.

The New Luddites' "car trial" was well-timed. Within weeks, the Government had refuelled the mad cow scare, and campaigners against veal exports were savouring the irony of an EU ban on British beef exports.

Since Ned began spreading his idea, six months ago, the network of New Luddites has grown to around 150 supporters, made up mainly of academics and green activists. The York "trial" attracted New Luddites from as far away as Cambridge and Birmingham, and Friends of the Earth is thinking of asking local groups to stage similar "trials" during National Transport Week in June.

However, some potential supporters have declined to join the New Luddites because of the name. Ned hides behind his alias for fear of losing his job in scientific research. "I think you'll find the campaign will get a lot of hostility from scientists," said one geneticist. "People will automatically think of Luddites as hammer-wielding thugs."

This concern was backed up recently after a call was put out for "New Luddites to arise and attack" certain "destructive" multinationals holding events at last month's 1996 National Week of Science, Engineering and Technology. Some companies put on extra security and the week's co-ordinators received a telephone call from a curious MI5 officer, eager to know more about the campaign.

The New Luddites' founder insists they will not be wielding hammers, except, perhaps, the odd inflatable one. Nor, he adds, do they share the American Unabomber's pathological hatred of modern society. Their approach will follow in the vein of other DIY campaigns, namely non-violent direct action and asking "difficult questions" at conferences. "We're past the stage of getting the debate started," says Ned. "We know the public is extremely unhappy about decisions affecting their lives being left to the 'experts'. We simply want to change the focus of science from profit creation to the common good."

The New Luddites say they intend to keep the issue alive with more direct action events and a series of countrywide debates on the future of food production.

Ned himself is keen to promote the Scandinavian idea of "knowledge exchanges" where universities provide free expertise to help solve problems within the local community. "It's a great idea," he says. "It's bringing science back into the community and this would be an ideal place for democratic technology to evolve."

Ironically, the New Luddites may find that the hardest battle of all is against scientific inertia. Several scientists I spoke to expressed reservations. "The problems of the general squeeze on finance and the push toward corporate research funding means that many scientists are unwilling to put their heads above the parapet," said one.

However, Ned says the New Luddites' message is now getting a sympathetic hearing. Earlier this month, Christian Taylor, a geneticist at Bath university, collected more than 200 signatures at an international scientific conference for a Luddite petition. And John Whitelegg, a New Luddite supporter and professor of environmental studies at Liverpool John Moores university is optimistic: "The scientific system is designed to weed out the unusual, eccentric or iconoclastic," he says. "It doesn't matter if the Luddites don't get respect from the conventional system. They are part of the groundswell of people who recognise that the current political boundaries are severely flawed and are setting up an external process of change."

The new wave of British goodbyes

As in the sixties, Britons are queuing to emigrate to Australia, New Zealand or Canada. Why this new rush to get out, asks **Catherine Bennett**



That faraway look . . . the *Abbott family of Warrington have an eye on New Zealand* PHOTO: CHRIS THOMOND

NEW ZEALAND, home of the kiwi, comprises two islands, South and North: a land mass of just over 100,000 square miles. There are several famous New Zealanders, including Kiri Te Kanawa and Jane Campion. All of them, with the exception of Jonah Lomu, live overseas.

Christine and Stephen Abbott live on the outskirts of Warrington. They would rather live in New Zealand. What's wrong with the outskirts of Warrington? "It's all estates now," says Mr Abbott, an engineer. "When we arrived there were fields all around us. Now the estates are going up at an alarming rate and you've got to walk 15 minutes until you come into the fields again."

This fate has yet to befall New Zealand. "It's so spacious," Mr Abbott says. "There's only three and a half million people there; that's like the population of Liverpool and Manchester combined, and New Zealand is bigger than the UK."

Australia is bigger still: 3,000,000 square miles. It is an arid land of great plains and low elevations. Its chief exports are coal, iron ore and meat. The population is 17.8 million. It once included Barry Humphries, Carmen Callil, Germaine Greer and Clive James, all of whom now live in Britain. Kathleen and Joe McLean also live in Britain. They would rather live in Australia. Have they ever been there? "No," says Kathleen. "We've seen videos, and friends have told us about it."

The videos suggest Australia is much warmer than Scotland, where Kathleen is a nurse and Joe a technician for an oil company. By the end of this summer, the McLeans expect to be in Perth, two of around 9,000 Britons who flee to Australia each year. There would be many more if Australia did not stipulate an annual "planning figure" — or quota — with a limited number of immigrants admitted on a points system. This year the demand for visas was so great that the figure has already been reached and no more visas will be granted until July.

"It's not like in the sixties, when they would just take anyone, on a £10 assisted passage scheme," says Colin Marchant, managing director of Outbound Newspapers, whose audience is would-be émigrés. "Countries now want immigrants who are going to help their economy and so somebody who's a failure here probably isn't going to be very attractive to another country. You have to have plenty of skills." In the emigration business, these people are known as "quality migrants".

Marchant says the number of inquiries from aspiring emigrants has tripled in the past five years. Last month, he organised a three-day "Emigration Show", at London's Olympia, which attracted 12,000 visitors. He attributes their disaffection to the recession: "People are getting more and more disillusioned with Britain. They don't feel they have much more future here. People say they feel insecure in their jobs, and the point we try and make is they're not necessarily going to find Shangri-La if they emigrate."

On the other hand, David Merz, principal migration officer at the Australian embassy, attributes the demand to the recession's easing off. "Because things are getting a bit better, it is actually making some classes of people prepared to go. It's almost like a ship in a storm, when the storm's on you keep the hatches battened down and you don't sail anywhere. When the fine weather starts you come up again, and put the sails up and start moving."

In particular, premier-quality, business emigrants have gathered in confidence. "Those sort of people were probably really keeping their heads down during the worst of the recession, when they maybe hankered after the idea of moving to Australia. Now things are getting a bit better, it's almost like people are taking a few more risks."

Britons seem to crave a sort of freedom. "You could describe it as a feeling of elbow room, you're not as confined. There are great opportunities in Britain as well but perhaps things are a little bit more structured, a little more confined. Whereas they feel that if they go to Australia, if they're prepared to put in the effort, there's perhaps more scope for them to achieve things."

'Until a generation above us leaves, there's nowhere for us to go. It's just very difficult to progress'

Jane West (not her real name) is 28 and dissatisfied with her lot. Her application for residency in Australia has just been approved and she awaits only the results of a medical to resign from her job as a food scientist. "It's not so structured there," she reports, having been struck by this on a holiday to Australia. "There seem to be a lot more constraints for people in Britain, in industry, whereas in Australia the rules haven't been written yet. 'Here, there always seems to be a rule to follow and there's all the bureaucracy that goes with big industry."

She decided to apply for a visa two years ago, succeeding on her second attempt. Most of her friends are envious, or hoping to follow her example. "Everybody's got the same idea — there are more opportunities there, to be honest. It's got to the stage here where you can't get anywhere. Until a generation above us leaves, there's nowhere for us to go. It's just very difficult to progress."

There are no official figures for permanent emigration from Britain. Almost a quarter of a million people left in 1993 (the last year for which numbers are available), though this includes everyone going to work abroad for a year or more. But in a recent Gallup poll, 49 per cent of the respondents said they would migrate if they could; emigration agencies, which help clients with applications for residency visas, say demand for their services is increasing.

Matthew Collins, who runs an emigration consultancy, Ambler Collins, claims business has expanded "enormously" in the past three years. He specialises in applications to New Zealand, Australia and Canada, the only countries which will accept applications from anywhere in the world. "There's been a lift in inquiries as people have been waiting for the feelgood factor to return," he says. "Basically it hasn't, and one of the big areas where people make a financial decision, especially if they have children, is their concern about the level of crime. Some just get fed up with the weather and the amount of traffic."

One of his clients, Robert Scott (an alias, as his current employers are ignorant of his scheme), plans to take his wife and two sons to Perth — Perth, Australia, that is. He works as an electrician in Scotland, and says the only thing he expects to miss is the scenery. "The way I look at it, you can be unemployed in Australia and you won't bloody freeze to death." He does not intend to be unemployed in Australia: "I'm one of those people who'll sweep the streets, if I have to. So long as I can earn a crust for the family, that's all I'm bothered about."

But he already earns a reasonable crust in Scotland. Why not stay? "I don't see any future in this country for my kids," he says, embarking on a passionate and comprehensive indictment of the United Kingdom. "The way that job opportunities have shrunk so much; it's been so eroded, the economic base of this country. There's been a complete abandonment of major manufacturing, which is a very bad thing for a country to do. It means your sole reliance is on the service sector industry. Then that puts you at the mercy of overseas international companies who have no bloody loyalty to this country whatsoever." But does he? Not any longer. "When you look at what has been lost, it's pretty desperate. When you think you had a nation which was incredibly proud of itself, and justifiably so, and what the world has to thank Britain for — it's all down the bloody tubes."

How does he account for the talented Australians who have left Australia for the devastation that is modern Britain? "Fine, showbiz and that," he says, dismissively. "That's all the service sector type thing. And I think I'm giving my boys a far better chance of something, rather than not a lot of chance of anything."

Australia is popular with Matthew Collins's clients: "A lot of that is due to Australian soaps and the picture they paint. They all think it's sun and fun." Second comes Canada, colder but easier of access. Last year Canada accepted 300,000 new residents, who qualify on a points system which varies from year to year. This year, for example, pâtissiers and chefs of all descriptions are awarded a lavish 10 points, whereas writers get three points and "humorists" a meagre one.

But first-class humorists should not repine. "Pretty well anyone who has the right qualifications can get there," says David Hall, managing director of Hall & Associates, which specialises in "immigration assistance" to Canada. "Canada has really pitched its immigration programme more in line with independent, self-sufficient immigration. They're less interested in dependents and more interested in people who make the economy hum."

He feels that British enthusiasm for emigration is less a consequence of recession, more the result of speedier communications. "There's a new breed of person walking the planet. They take their vacations all over the world, they see other economies, they see other lifestyles, and they don't see themselves as having to live or die in the same country that their parents did. This is not about getting on little wooden boats and sailing over the horizon — there's a new consciousness, where people are looking at the world as their neighbourhood and deciding where they want to live for lifestyle and career reasons."

In Warrington, Christine and Stephen Abbott have two children, a son of 17 and daughter of 19. "I feel as though we're smothering the children by making them stay here," says Mrs Abbott, a nurse. "I'd like them to realise that we live in a big world and they're not stuck to working in the UK."

Won't she miss Warrington? "Oh God, no no, oh no no," says Mrs Abbott, who visited the country last year. "I'll miss my friends but we'll find it pretty easy to find others. It's so British out there. The weather's very much like here, the way of life is like here, they drive on the correct side of the road — on the left — so it's very easy to go".

A correspondent from New Zealand in Outbound Newspapers regrets that "New Zealanders do not seem to have the same regard for animals as the British do. Dogs are often chained up. They are not loved and taken for walks as in the UK." But most émigrés seem to survive even such monstrous aberrations of behaviour. "We did a survey and overwhelmingly people who'd gone out there had succeeded," says Colin Marchant. "Not financially, but they felt they'd made the right decision. Lifestyle seems to be so important, rather than a great financial success. It's being able to enjoy the money they do earn, in a better climate and more relaxed atmosphere. Eighty per cent of the people we heard from had no regrets."

'It's being able to enjoy the money they do earn, in a better climate and more relaxed atmosphere'

The only sad thing, perhaps, is that these determined and accomplished Britons find their country intolerable. Thanks to the points system, those who succeed in leaving are educated and skilled, self-supporting and law-abiding. That presumably means that those who will never leave this sinking ship include the massed ranks of the unskilled and the chronically criminal. New Zealand's gain is Britain's loss.

"One of the great things about my job is that I'm always talking to people who have a lot of initiative, who are very positive thinking," says David Hall, who dispatches his clients to Canada. "Even if they've lost jobs in the past, they've got a lot of self-confidence, they always believe in tomorrow. They believe it even more so for their kids. It's a pleasure to talk to them. These are not moaners and groaners, they don't come into my office to tell me how bad Britain is, they're positive people with outlook and imagination and ambition."

Can we spare such paragons? Could anything be done to make them stay? Short of rapid global warming, urgent depopulation and an economic miracle, it would seem not.

When the chips are down

The hype about the V-chip has been intense. But **Arthur Pober**, President Clinton's adviser on the device, says we should beware of easy solutions

AS WE prepare to enter the 21st century, with multichannel television potentially opening up thousands of choices for consumers, parents face difficult decisions about the images and information they wish to have brought into their homes.

Now that scenes of domestic crime, random killings and terrorist attacks can be released almost immediately on air, concern has inevitably been growing about young peoples' exposure to media violence. Earlier this year, the US government responded by passing a law that, from 1998, all new TV sets will have to incorporate a V-chip restricting children's viewing of violent programmes.

As President Clinton said recently: "The V-chip gives parents a new ability to make choices about what their children see." What those choices are, and how they are to be determined, is another matter entirely.

The issues surrounding the V-chip are currently being examined within the broadcasting industry. The crux is the creation of a workable and informative rating structure. A balance has to be struck, reflecting both the practical realities of the TV industry and the benefits consumers desire. The advisory group faces a Herculean task.

President Clinton has exempted all news and sports programming from the ratings system. But what constitutes news and sports? Do all documentaries and interviews deserve exemption — or would interviews in talk shows and tabloid "soft news" be excluded?

Also on the list of practical concerns: Do we encode every single programme or issue a single rating for the entire series? Do we limit the system to prime time?

Then take the issue of violence. Simply counting violent acts is not workable: the number of times Elmer Fudd hits Bugs Bunny and the number of times a Nazi strikes a concentration camp inmate in Schindler's List are not and cannot be equated.

Researchers increasingly see a need to investigate violence in the context of the whole programme, and/or of the motivation of the character and the intent of the action. But how the standards might be defined and applied objectively has yet to be determined by the industry.

What has been established from early experiments is that blocking out only specific violent scenes actually causes more anxiety and frustration for the viewer. The V-chip currently piloted in Canada labels the whole programme for violent content, so that it can be blocked entirely, rather than just by individual segments.

Besides encoding according to intensity of violence, do we add additional parameters defined by "age appropriateness"? Or classify programmes by genre? The permutations are daunting, even before you further encode programmes in relation to sexual content, language, religious imagery, and use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco. In the context of Europe, with each nation's differing cultural and ethical perspectives, the matrix can be truly overwhelming.

It is still uncertain how much capacity there is in the V-chip to accommodate these permutations. Nor has it really been determined who will be responsible for the task of encoding all this material, or what rating system will be used. The system for movies and the one I created for videogames and software are being looked into, but you cannot simply boilerplate an entire mechanism on to another industry.

When the V-chip sets come on-stream, most homes will not replace their current sets immediately — and older sets may be in children's rooms, necessitating an additional V-chip box.

More importantly, those families that would probably best benefit from this type of signal-blocking — where there is the least parental supervision and often the most exposure to real-life violence — will undoubtedly be financially the least able to purchase these new sets.

The V-chip is not to be thought of as some magic pill. But a self-regulated ratings system, coupled with V-chip technology, can work — as long as the coding rules are clear, and there can be public discussion and challenges to the system. Such a system would restore *choice* to where it belongs: with parents.

Driven by duty

From celebrity to tireless aid worker: Bianca Jagger, Christian Aid's famous ambassador, talks to **Melanie McFadyean**



Bianca Jagger: a voice for the disenfranchised PHOTO: MARTIN ARGLES

IT WOULD be easy to have a go at Bianca Jagger, to slip into the current mood of the English zeitgeist, its cynicism, its appetite for character assassination, with references to the former wife of a rock star getting her kicks rescuing the poor, the sick and the rainforests. Recently she was staying in an expensive London hotel, publicising her journey around Nicaragua with the British charity Christian Aid. Sneer at her for being comfortable, for being beautifully dressed, for being Lady Bountiful. But it's not like that. She is a woman of integrity and nobody's fool.

She chose many years ago to use her time and her considerable intelligence to expose injustice and human rights abuses. She speaks without heat and she doesn't brag — her style is reserved and cool. And she by no means always travels in style. On two trips to Bosnia — one lasting four weeks, another six — she stayed in hotels where there was often no electricity, no water, no heat and continual shelling.

On her first trip she documented the mass rape of Bosnian women for the Helsinki Commission of Human Rights and on the second, she refused to leave Bosnia until she was allowed to take two children with her whom a Bosnian doctor asked her to save — one had leukaemia, the other a hole in the heart. The latter stayed with her for eight months in New York where he underwent successful heart surgery before being reunited with his family. The other died. She has organised the evacuation of another 20 Bosnian children.

Before meeting Bianca Jagger, you are told there are to be no questions about Mick. She is, understandably, cautious with journalists.

What, I asked her, made her relinquish a life of ease for a more arduous and punishing destiny. She cites some formative experiences. After the earthquake in Nicaragua in 1972, when she was 22 and just married, she went straight back. She was shocked to discover that Somosa, the Nicaraguan leader, doubled his fortune by pocketing the aid money sent for the disaster victims. She hadn't registered the corruption so forcibly before. She tells another story to illustrate what galvanised her to take up the plethora of causes to which she has attached herself over the past 20 years.

"There are so many people in the world with no voice, with no access to express their grievances and injustices, something that I realised after an experience I had with a Congressional delegation in an El Salvadorean refugee camp in Honduras in 1981. Thirty-five members of El Salvadorean death squads crossed the border with the acquiescence of the Honduran army and entered the camp. They took 30 men, tied their thumbs together behind their backs and set off to march them back to El Salvador where they would most certainly have been killed. We followed them on foot and took photographs of them. We shouted at them that we would denounce them and we got so close that they turned and faced us. At that moment I thought we were going to be killed but God helped us and they let the men go."

God may have had less to do with it than she and her companions, but her belief is not a pose, she is a practising Catholic. Jagger was detained but freed after intervention from the British and US embassies. She went on to testify to Congress on human rights abuses in El Salvador. "At that moment I realised how little people's lives are valued when their oppressors think they have no voice and they can kill them without anyone knowing."

And so she chose to speak for those less fortunate than herself. Conscious of edging towards forbidden territory I ask if her celebrity status is useful. She bristles: "I am not a celebrity. Maybe I was once." Thin though the ice is here, I ask her why she kept the name Jagger despite being divorced and the hint of frostiness disappears. "When I became known, I was known as Bianca Jagger. It is traditional in my country to keep your married name when you divorce, unless you remarry. Also my daughter Jade is called Jagger and that is important. Besides Bianca Jagger is a pretty name, I like it." She shrugs.

She could say she's done her bit and retire in comfort. She chooses not to. Instead she has been on fact-finding missions in Central America for several international human rights organisations and US congressional delegations, she has helped to set up a women's health centre in Harlem, she has testified before the Helsinki Commission for Human Rights and the US Congressional Human Rights Caucus. She is a member of Amnesty International and serves as goodwill ambassador for the Albert Schweitzer Institute. She is on the board of directors of Action Council for Peace in the Balkans and a special adviser of the Indigenous Development International at the University of Cambridge, and works to save the Central American rainforests.

Recently Jagger has spoken out against the death penalty: "The majority of those who are executed in the US are poor, have bad legal representation, are mentally ill and almost all are members of an ethnic minority. I am now involved in a commission presenting evidence against the use of the death penalty."

Still probing for reasons why she involves herself in these causes, she says perhaps it has something to do with being brought up a Catholic. "It's a sense of duty, of responsibility — if you are able to help you should; if your work could be crucial in highlighting injustice or atrocity, or if you can save a child's life — you have to. If I turned my back I'd never forgive myself, I could never look in the mirror and say I did everything I could."

An early influence on her was the divorce of her parents when she was 10. "After my father, who was well-to-do, divorced my mother, she had to work to maintain her children and keep us in school. There was a stigma attached to divorced women, they were treated unfairly." She decided then, as a child, that she was not going to be treated as a second-class citizen because she was a woman.

One might suppose that her sense of injustice would make her a socialist. But she has chosen the human rights route, and professes to be neither of the left or the right. "I'm not leftwing although I have progressive views — I'm effective because I'm objective. I care about social and economic injustice but that doesn't mean I have to categorise myself as left or right."

She may have to categorise herself before the Nicaraguans go to the polls in October. "I haven't decided yet whether I will become involved in a direct way with politics in Nicaragua. I have to decide whether I remain more effective as a human rights advocate or as a politician."

With her impressive intellectual grasp of social, economic and political situations, her ability to reel off statistics to great effect and her sympathy for the underprivileged, she could be a formidable opponent for any of the current Nicaraguan candidates. On her recent trip around the country with Christian Aid, which funds a number of projects and gives loans to peasant farmers denied them by the government, she was shocked to see that poverty and the gap between rich and poor is greater than ever.

PRESSING the point, I say surely she must have decided whether to get into the political shark-pool if the elections are so soon? She replies, with her famous lop-sided smile, "Off limits."

Jagger, who lived in Ireland when she was married to Mick, went back there last year, but not for sentimental reasons. She was with Amnesty International "highlighting their programme for the voices of the disappeared". She arrived just as the ceasefire began and found parallels with the Nicaraguan experience.

Choosing her words carefully, she says: "I don't support any side. Peace is the most important issue for Northern Ireland and there was a momentum during the 18-month ceasefire that needed a visionary to set the peace process in motion. I unequivocally condemn the bombing but I must stress my regret that Prime Minister John Major did not have the vision and commitment Yitzhak Rabin had in the Middle East to bring to term the peace process that could have ended the war and the unnecessary bloodshed."

Letter from Ganzhou Charlotte Lloyd

Snapshots of village life

THE OLD woman sits down in a wooden chair, taking her place at the centre of the photograph. Her eldest grandson stands behind her right shoulder, her second grandson behind her left. The last and youngest grandson, a naughty little boy of five, squirms with impatience as his parents position him between his grandmother's knees. Then there is silence, a moment of seriousness, and I click the shutter.

The winter sun casts a chill white light over the scene. All around the hills are barren, the fields bare. Within the courtyard of the traditional family house a motley collection of relatives and villagers stamp and rub hands to fend off the ferocious cold. Most of them are farmers who spend nine months of the year in exhausting agricultural labour. Now, in midwinter, there is little to do on the land and they are whiling away their holidays in conversation over the stove, drinking black tea and nibbling watermelon seeds.

No one in the village possesses a camera, so news of my arrival with an old Olympus SLR slung around my neck spreads like wildfire. Overwhelmed by the villagers' great kindness and hospitality to me, the first foreigner most of them have ever met, I have agreed to photograph them all.

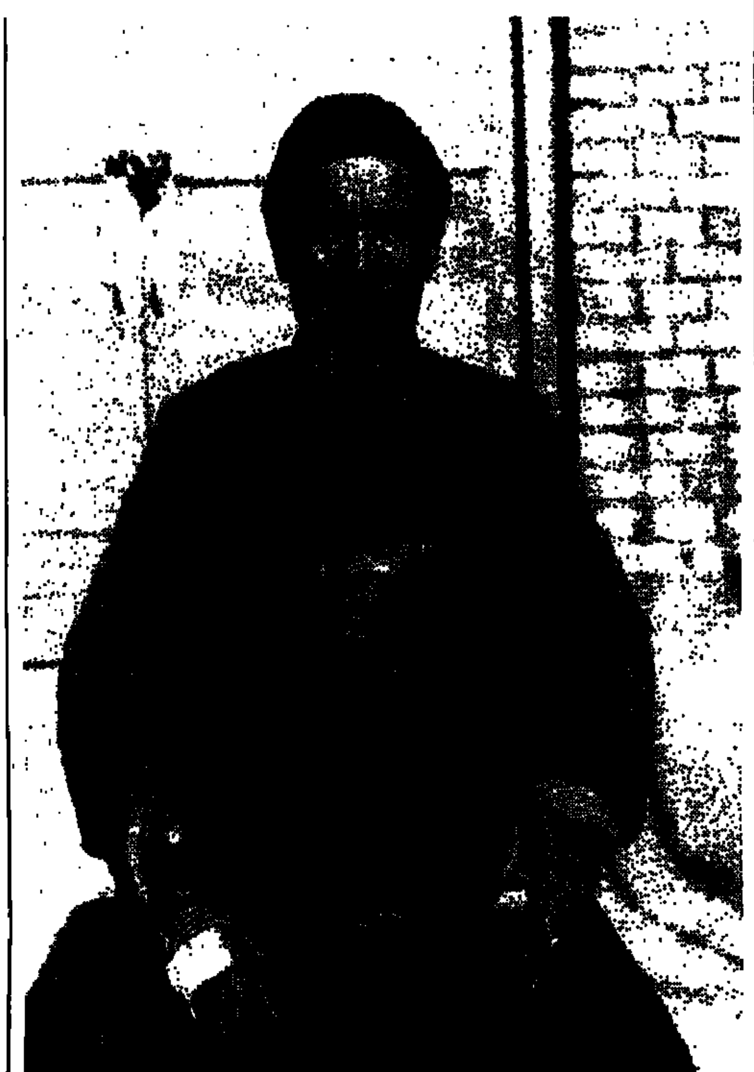
The pictures frame a moment in the history of the village, its social hierarchies and tight family units. The old woman's grandsons are known, according to Chinese tradition, as *laoda, laoer, laosan* — oldest, second oldest, third oldest. She has several granddaughters too, but, being female, they do not count in the family hierarchy. They huddle on the periphery of the courtyard as their brothers pose, excluded from the photograph just as they are excluded from the family lineage.

The old woman sits regally at the centre of my photograph. Behind her, behind the curtain which hangs over the main door of the house, a black-and-white photograph of her deceased husband presides over the family shrine, a constant reminder of the social supremacy of the older generation. The old lady's sons and grandsons are expected to kowtow before this image when they enter the room, and to burn incense and ghost money for their ancestors at every traditional festival. When the old woman dies her photograph will be placed there too.

I move from house to house, courtyard to courtyard, taking the official family photographs: a young woman and the fiancé chosen by her parents; baby sons with penises proudly displayed through the gap in open trousers; old people posing solemnly for my pictures, perhaps their last. These photographs, the most serious, are the ones which will grace the family shrines and be revered by future generations. The old people prefer to be photographed in black-and-white, feeling it, perhaps, to be a more ancestral medium.

And then there are the people I don't photograph. The madman who lost his mind when his wife died and his cradle-to-grave state job was taken from him. He crouches by the side of the road, rocking gently on his heels, lost in reverie. Then there is the illegitimate child whose mother ran away to the city because of social ostracism. And, of course, the baby girls.

Inside the houses are displayed the photographic archives of the older generation, snapshots taken in the local county town or even further afield. Old black-and-whites of the Cultural Revolution generation, who are uniformly dressed in unisex Maoist clothes, posing earnestly before a painted backdrop. The villager who went to Beijing, framed standing solemnly before the gateway in Tiananmen Square. There is also a studio wedding picture in colour of a son who went away to university and married a city girl. My photographs are the continuation of this recent tradition. Some day I'll go back to the village and my pictures will be there too, faded a little by time, scuffed at the edges by inquisitive fingers.



Like father like grandson . . . portrait of a family PHOTO: CHARLOTTE LLOYD

A Country Diary

J M Thompson

TIKAL, GUATEMALA: The large department of El Peten, in the north-east corner of Guatemala, is a complete contrast to the country's cool and mountainous highlands to the south, and the steamy Pacific slope in the west. In El Peten, vast areas of dense jungle cover the landscape, hiding small farming villages and forest hamlets. The Tikal National Park preserves 560 square kilometres of this tropical forest, as well as thousands of separate ruined structures of the Maya dynasty, the best known and most important of which are those at Tikal itself. Here, the towers of Temple IV rise to a height of 65 metres, making this the highest pre-Hispanic building in the western world, and having scrambled up the path holding on to trees and roots on the way, then up a metal ladder, there is a panoramic view from the top across the seemingly endless jungle canopy.

The birdlife at Tikal is prolific — brightly-coloured parrots, constantly squawking, dart from branch to branch in their search for fruiting trees; the unmistakable keel-billed toucan with its large canoe-shaped bill; ocellated turkeys in shining iridescent plumage; and the tiny humming-birds flashing from flower to flower, with such wonderful names as purple-crowned fairy and wedge-tailed sabrewing.

The forest mammals are far more discreet, the only sign of their presence usually being the rustle of leaves or a snapping twig, although occasionally a small *agouti* or white-tailed deer will cross a trail in front of you.

The animal that announces itself in the most alarming way is the Mexican black howler monkey, named for the ferocious voice which echoes through the forest at sunrise and sunset like the roar of an angry jaguar. The male has a throat sac that acts as a resonator and amplifies its calls, which can carry for more than a kilometre through the jungle.

Notes & Queries Joseph Harker

WHAT happened to General Noriega, captured when the US invaded Panama?

HE WAS found guilty of drug trafficking, racketeering and conspiracy, and sentenced to 40 years' imprisonment in July 1992. In December 1992, a US judge ruled that he was a prisoner of war, entitled to full protection under the Geneva Convention. In June 1995, Panama's government awarded him a pension of around £1,000 a month, in recognition of his 27 years' military service. — *Gina Hutchinson, Washington, Tyne and Wear*

FOUR CARS arrive simultaneously at the four approach roads to a roundabout. Each has to give priority to the car on its right. So who goes first?

THIRTY-FIVE years ago our family spent a year in Colorado. Although there were no roundabouts in the state there were many crossroads with no priorities designated. Among the rules in the highway code was the answer to the question: all vehicles to stop and the one with the lowest number plate to proceed first.

There was another strange rule about which I was asked at my driving test. How do you signal a right turn? (These were the days before electric winking lights and even before mechanical semaphores.) The answer, unbelievably, was "open the driver's door for a moment". — *E A Power, New Barnet, Hertfordshire*

WHY did the sparrow kill Cock Robin?

DURING the celebrations following the marriage of Cock Robin and Jenny Wren:

. . . in came the Cuckoo,
And made a great rout;
He caught Jenny,
And pulled her about.
Cock Robin was angry,
And so was the Sparrow,
Who fetched in a hurry
His bow and his arrow.
His aim then he took
But he took it not right,
His skill was not good,
Or he shot in a fright —
For the Cuckoo he missed,
But Cock Robin he killed!

The verdict: accidental death! — *Glyn Davies, Eccles, Manchester*

THIS is indeed the crucial problem: we have means and opportunity, but where's the motive? The truth, of course, is that the sparrow was framed, and his "confession" obtained under duress. Careful students will note that the bow, though referred to incessantly by the prosecution, was never found. — *Clive Lyons, London*

IS IT true that Dick Turpin was buried standing upright?

THIS false story probably comes from the fact that Turpin was buried in a very deep grave, in the churchyard of St George's parish in York. Turpin was a popular villain and, according to Benson's Remarkable Trials And Notorious Characters (c.1842), "the people who acted as mourners took such measures as they thought would secure the body". But the body was illegally exhumed the next morning and eventually found in a surgeon's garden. Turpin was reburied in the same grave. — *Mike Meakin, Wimbledon, London*

HE HAD a dyslexic gravedigger who thought his name was Dick Turnip. — *Terry Mahoney, Buntingford, Hertfordshire*

PICTURES and text can be "inverted" from black on white, to white on black. Is it possible to alter sounds/music in a similar fashion? And would the resulting sound be listenable?

SOUND is made from a rapid alternation of pressure variation, at thousands of cycles per second. If each increase of pressure were turned to a decrease and vice versa, this would be one form of inversion. But it would sound exactly the same, just as the inversion of a chessboard pattern looks the same as the original. This is because sound and the chessboard derive their effect from alternating fluctuations of pressure or darkness, not from absolute value. — *Roy Williams, Pasadena, California, USA*

STRICTLY speaking, if one were to invert a sound in the way described, one might have to take frequency components of the sound which were absent in the original signal and make them infinitely intense. Such a sound would be intolerably loud. However, it is certainly possible to invert a sound's spectrum (the distribution of a sound's energy across frequency) so that those frequency components which are relatively low in intensity are made more intense (louder) and those which are relatively high are made less intense (quieter). — *Dr Deborah Fantini, Dept of Psychology, Essex University*

BANJOIST Bela Fleck and the Flecktones, on the title track of their CD, UFOTOFU, play a Fleck composition which is a musical palindrome, with the second half of the piece being an exact reversal of the first half. — *Pete Marshall, Crozet, Virginia, USA*

Any answers?

CAN the British monarch still order a beheading? If so, what is she waiting for? — *Roger Kidley, Jakarta*

"IT TAKES a village to raise a child" is, according to Hillary Clinton, an old African proverb. Is it, and if so, which group in Africa should be credited? — *David Voas, La Luz, New Mexico, USA*

WHICH animal can tolerate the greatest temperature range? — *Daniel Green, Cheltenham*

WHY, when women have higher body fat than men, do we always feel the cold (in bed) more than our male sleeping companions? — *Jayne Wood and Carole Ray, Kochi, Japan*

Answers should be e-mailed to weekly@guardian.co.uk, faxed to 0171/44171-242-0985, or posted to The Guardian Weekly, 75 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3HQ.

Why does Peter Handke, Austria's foremost living writer, stand alone against most of the Western world in his passionate defence of Serbia in the Bosnian war? **Ian Traynor** went to hear him in Frankfurt

The dream world across the Drina

IT IS a Sunday morning in Frankfurt on the River Main. The streets are dead, the high-rise temples of German high finance have fallen silent. But at the city's theatre, the Schauspielhaus, the crowds are bustling. A police cordon and electronic security screens monitor everyone entering the packed house. It is standing room only for Peter Handke.

The novelist and playwright, Austria's foremost living writer and star of the German cultural firmament, ambles apprehensively on stage to loud applause. He adjusts his glasses, peers at the audience, and with nary a word of introduction, embarks on a 90-minute reading from his new book.

It is a lyrical, finely-wrought description of a recent journey to Serbia coupled with raging invective against the Germans, the Croats, the Slovenes, the West generally and the international media in particular who are guilty of demonising the Serbs.

Handke begins diffidently, hesitantly, but as his self-assurance grows, so does his manifest anger with the rest of the world's treatment of the Serbs and its attitude to the Balkan wars of the past four years: "On my travels I, at least, did not see Serbia as a land of paranoiacs — much more as the huge room of an orphaned, yes, an orphaned, abandoned child . . . But who knows? What can a stranger know?"

Handke is no stranger to controversy. He relishes causing a stir. He has previously dismissed three of the holiest names in 20th century German letters, Thomas Mann, Robert Musil, and Franz Kafka, as rubbish. An early play from the 1960s called Insulting The Public consisted of four speakers spending an evening at the theatre haranguing, taunting, and insulting the audience.

As soon as the Yugoslav wars erupted in Slovenia in the summer of 1991, Handke parted with the prevailing perceptions to denounce Slovene nationalism as "the most wretched and lowest form of humanity".

He reserves a special venom for his native Carinthia in southern Austria: "The old fascists, the most wretched creatures in all of Europe, are to be found in the provinces of Styria and Carinthia along the Austro-Yugoslavian border. They're the most incorrigible people. They contaminate even their own sons and daughters."

And Handke, aged 53, born of a German soldier father and a Slovene mother in southern Austria and also of the German-speaking '68 generation that turned violently on its parents and now occupies the high ground in the media, the academies, and politics, is also fond of venting his anti-German spleen.

It is an attitude that strikes a chord among the self-loathing Germans gathered in the Schauspielhaus. The only applause that interrupts his 90-minute reading comes when Handke attacks not the Balkan warring parties, not the Americans, British, French, United Nations, Nato, but Germany and the Germans.

Notwithstanding the applause, Handke's latest book, A Winter Journey To The Danube, Sava, Morava, And Drina Rivers, Or Justice For Serbia (Suhrkamp, DM24.80), has the German chattering classes in uproar. From Hamburg to Vienna and beyond, the literary columns and cultural supplements have been hijacked by outraged essayists eager to add to the heated debate Handke has unleashed.

The Swiss dramatist, Juerg Laederach, quit Suhrkamp in protest at his publishers winning the Handke book rights after accusing the Austrian of encouraging neo-fascism. The writer Peter Schneider, an engaged pro-Bosnian, took to the pages of Der Spiegel to charge Handke with criminal naivety. The Vienna-based Serb writer, Milo Dor, dubbed Handke a "clueless tourist". Many intellectuals say they will never be able to read Handke the same way again.

The row has also spread to Paris, where Handke lives, drawing French film-makers, philosophers, and writers into the brawl, perhaps because Handke treats Le Monde and Libération to a verbal whiplashing.

In Germany, now that the Yugoslav war may be over after almost five grim years, the anguished debate over apportioning blame and guilt about Germany's role in the Balkans has only just begun.

The Germans are the key European supporter of the Croats, who if things stay the way they are, will be the net victors of the conflict. What may seem more surprising in faraway Britain is that this support is a vote winner in Germany. In a recent two-hour speech before a large, packed provincial beer hall, the Bavarian prime minister, Edmund Stoiber, made a point of including a spot of Serb-bashing in his rhetoric and was rewarded with loud applause.

Handke has blown a hole in the politically correct consensus by heroicising the Serbs and denouncing just about every other actor involved in a polemic that is gentle, reflective, wonderfully evocative and extraordinarily vicious.

"I've been meaning to go to Serbia for almost four years," are the opening words of the travelogue. "Above all, it was because of the war that I wanted to go to Serbia, to the land of those generally dubbed the 'aggressors'."

He then launches into the first of many attacks on Western media coverage of the Balkan bloodbath, dismissing the reporting as one-sided fabrication tailored to preconceived notions of right and wrong, guilt and innocence to be found in Western newsrooms and among the public. This writer alone, goes the claim, will bear witness, unearth the truth.

Handke believes in the revelatory power of The Word, in the writer as a holy scribe and the vessel of a bigger poetic force. This is a constant running through several of his novels, from The Afternoon Of A Writer to My Year In The Bay Of Nobody, although he is also noted for his wordless and speechless dramas such as The Hour We Knew Nothing Of Each Other, staged to critical acclaim by Luc Bondy at the 1994 Edinburgh festival.

As such, he is scathing about lower species of the writing craft like journalism, although on the Frankfurt stage he stresses he does not want to cause an argument about the merits of various forms of writing and describes journalism as a "cousin" of his loftier calling.

ILLUSTRATION: ZYGMUNT JANUSZENSKI

HANDKE, whom John Updike has called the finest German writer of his generation, favours a lean, rigorous, penetrating way with words, painstakingly seeking the essence of an object or character in the very act of description.

The Serbia that he finds in Belgrade and deep in the snowbound provinces and villages is a sad and lonely country peopled by proud figures returned to a pre-industrial age by years of international trade boycotts.

The simplicity of the pre-capitalist system he encounters is so attractive to Handke that he wants the country's enforced isolation maintained so that this charm is not lost, a sentiment not likely to be shared by many of those directly affected.

In the country with "the most petrol stations in the world" — people use canisters and bottles of petrol because all the garages are closed — he finds himself wishing that this custom be kept up and emulated elsewhere. In the Belgrade markets he observes the endless haggling and bartering and concludes: "I caught myself wishing that the country's seclusion continue, that it remain inaccessible to the Western or any other world of goods and monopolies."

It is such passages that have enraged his many critics who contend that if Handke went to try to understand the Serbs, he ended up patronising them.

But of the flood of criticism running Handke's way, the most devastating has come from the pen not of a German, but of a Serbian writer, the Berlin-based Bora Cosic. In a powerful response, exquisitely understated and dripping with quiet irony, Cosic wrote:

"This writer, the Austrian, draws his own quintessence from the smallest things. And his very personal style, too. The very worst crimes get mentioned rather sweetly. And so the reader completely forgets that we're dealing with crimes.

"A friend of mine tells me that this text could help me to correct a feeling I have the whole time I am here. He says I'm so ashamed of being of this people and that this may be quite unnecessary. For the Austrian writer who visited my country found only very proud people there. They proudly put up with everything that happened to them, so much so that in their pride they didn't bother to ask why all this was happening to them."

Handke does ask and he finds the answers only outside Serbia. "This has nothing to do with a J'accuse. I'm only seeking justice." He then goes on to accuse all and sundry. Milan Kucan, the Slovene leader, is a "German lackey". Franjo Tudjman, the Croatian leader, is a "well-known evil". Bosnia is the "Muslim state". Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb leader twice indicted for genocide and crimes against humanity, is defended against his detractors, while Slobodan Milosevic, president of Serbia and the real evil genius of the Balkans, is presented as an unknown quantity undeserving of denunciation.

The real focus of his wrath, however, are the International media generally and especially Germany's foremost conservative newspaper, the Frankfurter Allgemeine, "Europe's central Serb-devouring paper", "in its core the organ of a dark sect, a sect of power, and of a German one at that. This newspaper delivers the poison that never ever heals, the poison of words."

The paper, mainly through the thundering pro-Catholic, pro-Croatian editorials of one of its publishers, Johann Georg Reissmueller, has indeed been utterly central to the formation of German policy and public opinion on the Balkans.

German foreign office staff readily admit that the Reissmueller campaign hugely influenced Germany's push for international recognition of Croatia at the end of 1991, a decision that still generates rancour elsewhere in Europe.

The media coverage, Handke asserts, has almost always been one-sided and from the non-Serb side, wilfully ignoring the Serb dimension: Handke insists his mission is to bear witness and to write only about what he sees and experiences directly. It is a laudable aim, and easily the strongest parts of his book are when he does precisely that.

But he fails to observe his own injunction when, without visiting Bosnia, he starts accusing the Bosnians, without a shred of evidence, of staging market massacres in Sarajevo and doubting the slaughter of Muslims at Srebrenica last summer.

Handke belongs to those the Tudjman regime disparages as "Yugo-nostalgics". He grieves for the south Slav federation and is not alone inside or outside Yugoslavia in seeing the sum of that country as greater than its dismembered parts.

IN HIS mid-eighties novel, Repetition, the main character Filip Kobal crosses from Handke's native Carinthia into Slovenia in search of a long-lost brother who disappeared during the second world war. "The free world, it was generally agreed, was the world from which I had come," Filip notes after entering Slovenia. "For me at the moment, it was the world that I had so literally before me."

That was Slovenia when it was Yugoslavia and cherished by Handke. But the Slovenes let him down and in 1991 he turned his invective on them.

Now he seems to have found the same idyll among the Serbs. Of a snowbound November day by the River Drina, he writes: "As for me, I can now say that I've hardly ever felt so fully, totally settled into, in harness with the world and what's happening in the world as during those eventful days of snow and mist by Bajina Basta on the river at the Bosnian-Serbian border." It remains to be seen whether the Serbs, unlike the Slovenes, will live up to his high expectations.

But in the Frankfurt theatre after his reading, all hell is breaking loose with rival sides in the argument shouting each other down. Handke is utterly unchastened. His only regret, he says, is that his defence of the Serbs was not strong enough.

Double vision in a journey to the underworld

MUSIC
Andrew Clements

IT IS 10 years since The Mask Of Orpheus, most ambitious, elaborate and thrilling of all Harrison Birtwistle's stage works, was first performed. The staging at English National Opera in 1986 established it as one of the most important operas of our time, yet the sheer scale of the work and the resources it demands have prevented any revival.

But last week, to open the London South Bank Centre's Birtwistle retrospective, Orpheus was seen again. It was a semi-staging to be sure, rather than the full theatrical works, but in a superb performance by the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Andrew Davis it emerged as a masterpiece.

In many ways the stripped-down presentation devised by director Stephen Langridge and designer Alison Chitty for the Festival Hall platform was more lucid and easier to follow than David Freeman's original ENO production. Freeman's treatment had elegance and fluidity, but it played fast and loose with the opera's intricate formalism.

The Mask Of Orpheus is never a straightforward piece of storytelling. Orpheus's journey to the underworld to try to recover Euridice may be its central panel, but the work is much more concerned with exploring the myths surrounding the Orpheus legend: alternative readings of an event are presented or recalled in flashback later in the work, while each protagonist is portrayed by two singers, a mime and a puppet. When Orpheus sings, his solo becomes a duet; when Euridice is killed, we watch two versions of her death.

What prevents this scheme from disappearing into its own complexity and makes it cohere so thrillingly is the power of Birtwistle's music — the emotional intensity and grandeur he generates, the intense lyricism he packs into the vocal lines, the terrifying intrusions of the voice of Apollo, whose electronically generated signals control the course of the work. There are six purely electronic interludes too, when the main action is frozen and a mime troupe enacts myths related to the Orpheus story.

Davis, with Martyn Brabbins as second conductor, ensured the gigantic scale of The Mask was powerfully projected, while the singing cast — led by Jon Garrison and Peter Bronder's Orpheus, and Jean Rigby and Anne-Marie Owens's Euridice — were tirelessly committed. The Cholmondeleys and the Featherstonehaughs supplied the mimes. But pulling out those names is invidious; this was a massive undertaking realised more successfully than one could have hoped for.

Smoking out the humanism

CINEMA
Derek Malcolm

IT TOOK a Taiwanese director, Ang Lee (albeit with considerable help from Emma Thompson), to put Jane Austen's Sense And Sensibility on the screen in a way that made it something more than just a heritage movie. And, curiously enough, it has taken the Chinese-American Wayne Wang (with the help of Paul Auster himself) to put his work on the screen without betraying any of the complicated writer's purposes.

Smoke is the kind of intelligent, humanist film that sends you home slightly more optimistic about the world at large — a comedy with heart but without false sentiment.

Set in Brooklyn, 1990, and based on Auster's Auggie Wren's Christmas Story, Smoke has Harvey Keitel as Auggie — a cigar store owner whose regular customers seem like a microcosm of neighbourhood life and are united not only by friendship with him but by their personal crises.

William Hurt's novelist, for instance, has suffered from writer's block since his pregnant wife was gunned down in a senseless street incident. After having been saved by a young teenager (Harold Perrineau) from being run down by a bus and having learned he's in trouble, the novelist takes the boy in, only to find that he has hidden a bag of stolen money in his apartment.

Meanwhile Auggie gets a visit from an ex-lover (Stockard Channing) who tells him he has a grown-up daughter he didn't know about who is now pregnant and a crack addict. Somehow the boy's hidden swag gets to Auggie, who gives it to his former lover for their daughter.

Upon this main plotline, Wayne and Auster skilfully weave a symphony of chance and coincidence that rules the lives of its leading characters and posits the view that the people we see are not heroes or villains, but are simply the victims of fate.

They are not symbols but very human characters, and the complications of Auster's story-telling are warmed by direction that means us to know this. It also has the merit of allowing the cast to round off their characterisations — something Keitel does supremely well as the wise veteran of life who still doesn't quite know what to do about it. And Forest Whitaker is especially good as the one-armed father of the runaway boy who has abandoned his family years ago.

Such a film could easily have seemed messy and inconsequential in less expert hands. But the resonance of Auster's writing, particularly about parents and their children, lost to each other but still seeking solace, gives Smoke a true centre. The scenes in which Auggie meets his hostile daughter (Ashley Judd), or when the runaway boy hears his father's story of how he killed his wife in a drunken car accident, are at the heart of a tale that seems diffuse but runs surprisingly deep.

Wang uses the method of allowing scenes (and characters) to develop naturally while retaining the shape of the whole — a rare virtue in the rush for instant dramatic effect we so often see nowadays.

Shock value

ART
Adrian Searle

THE Tate Gallery Liverpool provides the opening venue for this year's New Contemporaries, the annual send-in show for art students and recent graduates. The exhibition is about fresh meat and new blood — a chance to spot the emerging Hockneys and Kitajs, the Traceys and Damiens of tomorrow.

So here come the dealers, or rather, here comes Charles Saatchi, who has already bought the contents of Nicky Hoberman's studio. Hoberman paints larger-than-life babies and ugly infants, the terrifying toddlers and little Lolitas of the current art-world baby boom. She's found a new angle on the forbidden territory of child portraiture, except, of course, it isn't that new at all — the evil brat has been a Hollywood mainstay for decades. W C Fields warned against working with children and animals, and Hoberman's overly-sweet, sinister tots are the kids he warned us against.

The kids grow up, of course, and end up in the New Contemporaries, where they have to follow on the heels of the success of recent batches of fresh-from-the-art-farm young contenders. This has bred a climate in which making a high-impact entrance is perceived as being more likely to enhance an emerging career than quiet, dogged pursuit.

So we find paintings of lovelorn flies, smoking ladybirds and a street-corner tart who turns out to be a chicken drumstick, painted in a style derived from Gary Larson cartoons; a video of a man in a fish tank and a live goldfish in a glass suitcase. There are porno paintings and blurry paintings and boring paintings; grimly atmospheric, grey-on-black photos of soap opera stars, including weary cardigan-queen Pauline Fowler from EastEnders; and a sound piece in which an invisible audience applauds nothing at all.

The one-liner and the sight-gag aren't enough to sustain a lengthy career. Nowadays, you can be a burnt-out art star at 25, and after a while the humour and iconoclasm of the New Contemporaries — selected by artist Mark Wallinger, Burlington Magazine editor and critic Richard Shone, and Maria de Corral of the Reina Sophia in Madrid — wears a bit thin, especially where the work depends on art jokes and quips about television.

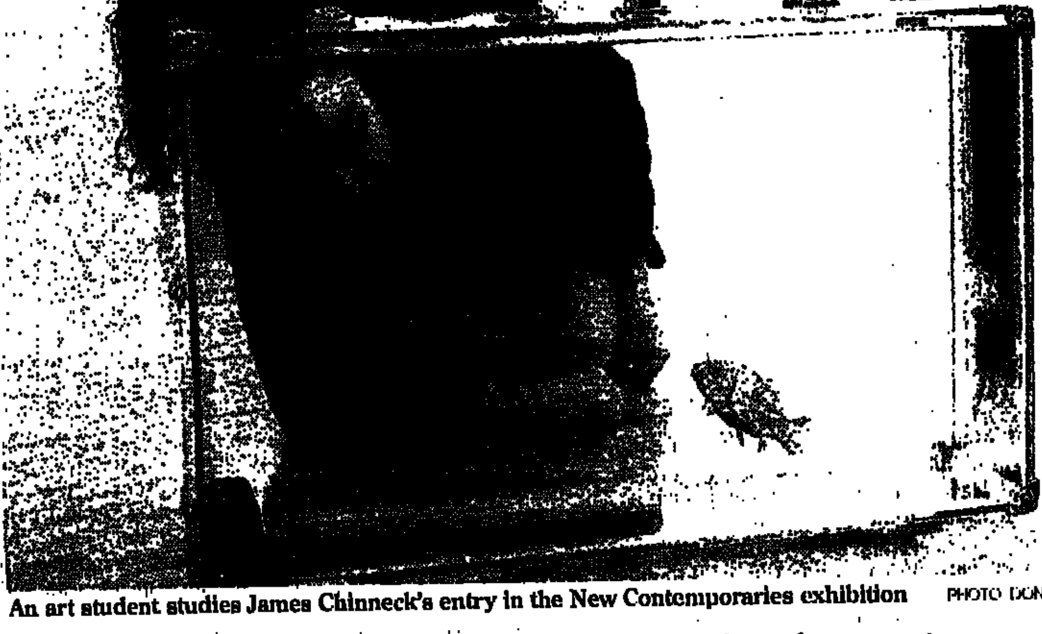
"Leeds United", a combo of artists living in Leeds, are doomed to repeat the work they aim to ape. They're given a disproportionate amount of space here for their irritating tactics. Not so much new lads as old-style louts, they did a wee-wee up against the freshly painted Tate Gallery wall as part of one work — a paintless piss-take on the work of painter Ian Davenport — and created a simulacrum of a Damien Hirst spot-painting out of nastily coloured egg-nog cocktails.

Listeners to radio comedy know just how limp this kind of self-referentiality is. In art, it is where post-modernity meets its apotheosis, and signals a kind of emptying out of meaning, or the fact that the artist had no ideas worth recording. But this itself can be turned into the work's subject, dramatising the plight of the young artist's bereft psyche. Many troubled young men in search of a character find themselves playing air-guitar in front of the bedroom mirror, miming to heavy metal guitar heroes, but Jamie Holman, deconstructing this embarrassing habit, has made a video of the artist having a dramatic, pelvis-pumping, air-wank. Such selfless, thrusting devotion to the cause of art should be applauded. Tim Noble's Ornament (In Crisis) has the artist's head drowned in a fish-tank, breathing through a tube, annoyed by goldfish and being prodded by a woman wielding a little fishnet. Heavy stuff, this contemporary art, with its Beckettian longueurs and poignant, futile gestures.

The most arresting work here might start out with the self, but goes beyond it. In Monika Oechsler's brilliantly choreographed Gold-diggers, adults act out school gym routines, skipping, passing a ball, and clambering along the kindergarten-sized chairs which line the hall. Sudden, sinister moments interrupt the flow of the action. A ball is thrown, but when it is caught it has turned into a bouquet; a woman with a bullwhip controls the skipping exercise; a woman dances on a sheet of glass, shattering it with her stamping feet. Oechsler's gym class is a model of human co-operation, power games and rivalries.

In Chantal Joffe's paintings derived from porn-mags, the loosely-handled paint provides a commentary on the action. Her girls with sad eyes, forced smiles and smudged lipstick go down on each other, get it up the bum and are pawed at by clumpy, simian male hands. Joffe's self-conscious painting style, with its skewed anatomies, sour, over-bright and sometimes faecal colour, her slithery painterliness, is a play on joylessness. She shows that the pleasure of looking — whether at paintings or pornography — is never innocent.

Gary Perkins has bolted surveillance cameras to the little 1:20 scale mock-up rooms he has made, relaying edgy, partial views of their diminutive interiors. They are scenes of possible crimes and accidents. Perkins's rooms are fictitious spaces, late 20th century dolls houses in which misery rather than domestic bliss takes place. These models of the world are at first sight funny, but reveal themselves as bleak, forbidding places. They are models of the mind, a place many of the artists here have never escaped. They should get out more often.



An art student studies James Chinneck's entry in the New Contemporaries exhibition PHOTO: DON McPHEE

Lone goldfish causes ripples in the art world

DAI VAUGHAN thought the goldfish was rather enjoying the art show. "It's just looking at a lot of culture vultures as opposed to people slouched in front of the telly," he said. "It looks like a very happy fish to me," *writes Martyn Halsall.*

But Maureen Barrett-Spring saw the goldfish, exhibited by James Chinneck, as victim of a "cold and pretentious" exhibition. Other visitors had gone further: the RSPCA confirmed a number of complaints. It concluded that the fish was "not necessarily happy [but] is not in a cruel situation".

"In Victorian times they had conversation pieces, but now they call them art," Ms Barrett-Spring said. "I think it's the same with this; it's not art, it's a conversation piece."

Stein pushes Chekhov to the limits

Michael Billington in Rome salutes a stunning new production of Uncle Vanya, rooted in nature

WE HAVE seen many fine productions of Uncle Vanya in Britain. We tend to define them, however, by the casting of the vanquished Vanya and the ecological Astrov: Redgrave and Olivier, Gambon and Pryce, McKellen and Sher have formed unforgettable partnerships. But the key feature of Peter Stein's breathtaking new production — currently playing at the Teatro Argentina in Rome and due at the Edinburgh Festival in August — is that it is Sonya and Elena who dominate; it becomes the tragedy of two women, united but separated by their fatal passion for Astrov, as much as that of the two men.

Stein brings to the production, played in Italian, all the qualities that informed his legendary German versions of Three Sisters and The Cherry Orchard: an astonishing visual beauty, a detailed soundscape, a novelistic attention to human behaviour. Yet he told me that he had not originally planned to stage Uncle Vanya: he had always thought it lacked the symphonic richness of Chekhov's two last plays. What converted him was the desire of the two actresses, Maddalena Crippa (Elena) and Elisabetta Pozzi (Sonya), to work together. But once he started to research the play in depth Stein was staggered by the radical nature of Chekhov's structure, the use of a calculatedly limited vocabulary (he points out the play has only a thousand words) and the power of its pauses and silences.

Stein's production also reminds us that the play is subtitled Scenes From Country Life In Four Acts: never before have I seen a version so rooted in the sights and sounds of nature. In the opening act the designer, Ferdinand Wogerbauer, fills the stage with birch trees in full flower. By the time we reach the overwhelming final act the trees have taken on the coppery tint of autumn, echoing the emotional transition of the characters.

Stein's sounds and images are unforgettable: the banging window heralding a night storm, the mocking sunlight that pours in as the Professor announces his plan to sell the estate, the stagehand who finally appears to douse the lamplight as if Vanya and Sonya are for ever frozen in solitude and sadness. But Stein also brings out the true nature of Chekhov's tragedy: that the sense of death is accompanied by a rich sense of life and an aching awareness of what might have been.

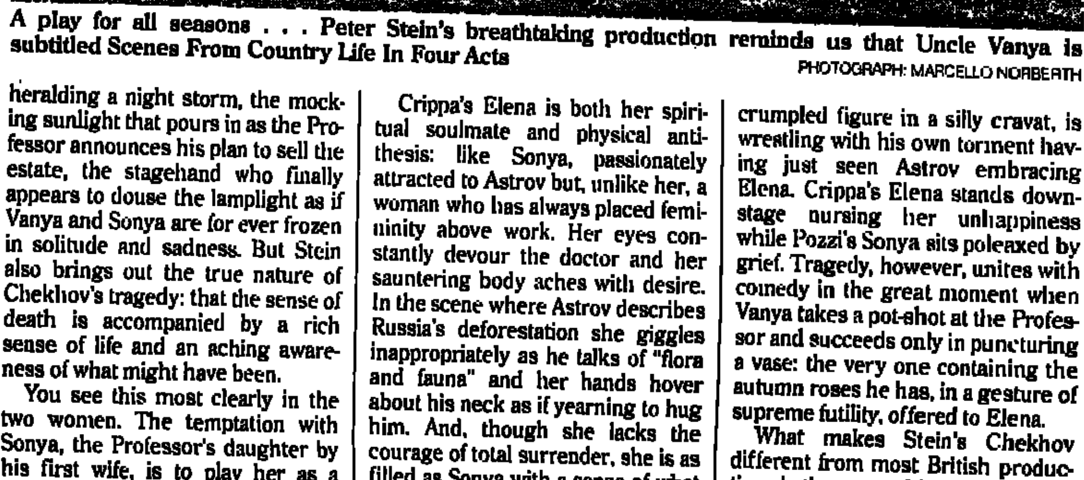
You see this most clearly in the two women. The temptation with Sonya, the Professor's daughter by his first wife, is to play her as a dowdy drudge whom Astrov understandably rejects. But Elisabetta Pozzi lends her a rapt devotion and burning ecstasy that makes you aware Astrov is turning down the chance of a lifetime.

There is a heartstopping moment in the second act when their bodies brush and their lips almost touch and you realise that Astrov — played by Remo Girone with just the right mixture of sensitivity and coarseness — is simply leaning past her to get a bottle of vodka. Pozzi presents us with a woman violently torn between a dream of happiness and the dawning certainty of despair.

Crippa's Elena is both her spiritual soulmate and physical antithesis: like Sonya, passionately attracted to Astrov but, unlike her, a woman who has always placed femininity above work. Her eyes constantly devour the doctor and her sauntering body aches with desire. In the scene where Astrov describes Russia's deforestation she giggles inappropriately as he talks of "flora and fauna" and her hands hover about his neck as if yearning to hug him. And, though she lacks the courage of total surrender, she is as filled as Sonya with a sense of what might have been: before they finally part, her hands caress Astrov's travelling bag, his medical phials and even his pencil.

Stein, however, masterfully combines individual despair with a sense of choreographed irony. The highpoint comes in the third act which rivals — and even outdoes — Olivier's landmark Chichester production. The sunlight pours in as Renzo Giovampietro's smug Professor outlines his plans for the estate listened to only by his former mother-in-law who dutifully takes notes. Both are serenely oblivious to the surrounding suffering. Roberto Herlitzka's superb Vanya, a crumpled figure in a silly cravat, is wrestling with his own torment having just seen Astrov embracing Elena. Crippa's Elena stands downstage nursing her unhappiness while Pozzi's Sonya sits poleaxed by grief. Tragedy, however, unites with comedy in the great moment when Vanya takes a pot-shot at the Professor and succeeds only in puncturing a vase: the very one containing the autumn roses he has, in a gesture of supreme futility, offered to Elena.

What makes Stein's Chekhov different from most British productions is that everything is pushed to the limit: the passion, the pain, the ecstasy, the sorrow. His production also has a richness of texture in its use of sound and light that derives from a close study of Stanislavski's notes for the original production. In the final act the grating scratch of Vanya's pen on the ledger-book, the click of the abacus, the sound of harness-bells on the departing horses form a heartbreaking accompaniment to the sense of desolation. As Sonya assures Vanya "we shall rest" and Waffles strums his guitar we reach at the very heart of the human tragedy: the sense of wasted potential and of dogged endurance until death.



A play for all seasons . . . Peter Stein's breathtaking production reminds us that Uncle Vanya is subtitled Scenes From Country Life In Four Acts PHOTOGRAPH: MARCELLO NORBERTH

Pageant of oddballs at a fairy marriage

DANCE
Judith Mackrell

WHEN Ashton choreographed Illuminations for New York City Ballet in 1950, the Americans might have supposed they were getting an all-English package, given that the ballet had a score by Benjamin Britten and designs by Cecil Beaton. But the work, which is based on prose poems by Rimbaud, turns out to be a very odd hybrid of styles. Beaton's Pierrot costumes and decorative backdrops cross Les Enfants du Paradis with Paul Klee, Britten's score is almost French in its obliqueness and brevity and Ashton's choreography is characterised more by the stark gestures and powered moves of early Balanchine than by his usual fizzing brilliance and lyricism.

In fact, as the Royal Ballet's current revival shows, what is most disappointingly English about the ballet is the degree to which Rimbaud's intemperate rhapsodic narrative has been tamed into a pageant of quaint street folk and symbolic oddballs. As the Poet (Jonathan Cope) strides through the hectic world of his imagination, struggling between Sacred and Profane Love, there's little heat or violence in his encounters.

Yet Illuminations is still a fascinating and beguiling period piece. Ashton fills the stage with odd and dreamy pictures as seductive as a magic lantern show. And there are also ineffable moments of choreography. When Sacred Love (Darcey Bussell) is held aloft by four men and crosses her tremulously beating feet for a brief pause, the effect when she pushes them slowly and ecstatically apart again, against the beat of the music, is both profoundly erotic and sublime.

As the Royal's all-Ashton evening reveals, his work is full of such images, which don't literally figure action but piercingly capture the shape and rhythm of emotion. His 1946 Symphonic Variations is both transcendent and joyous, but I can't remember seeing a cast that's ever done it justice. The Royal fielded some of its finest dancers, but though each had their moments of beauty they didn't gel as a group and were as jumpy as exam students.

Closing the bill was The Dream, which featured some delicious fairies and lovers but was miscast in its leading roles. Leanne Benjamin doesn't have the eerie transparency necessary for immortals, though Tetsuya Kumakawa does look glorious in about 50 per cent of the choreography. He turns pirouettes as casually as the rest of us stroll down the street, and it's glorious watching his spinning form rise and fall, speed and decelerate to fill the music's every crevice. But his acting is still weak and this ballet isn't just about dancing, it's also about the ups and downs of a fairies' marriage.

Odour-beater gets a whiff of a real phewee

TELEVISION
Nancy Banks-Smith

BOB "Rambo" Rasmussen, who surfaced all too briefly in 3D (Yorkshire), is a New York inspector with special responsibility for smells. I think we have the makings of a new kind of cop series here.

Rambo is a burly bloke and his badge of office is big enough to bounce back bullets. When he hears of an offensive smell, it's on with the flashing blue light and the screaming siren.

This puts the fear of God into the little guy running the fast-food joint. Don't try to throw Rambo off the scent by claiming the manager's out to lunch. "You're the manager!" he says, grinding a tooth or two. "I'm making you the manager today! You're the boss today!" The little guy looked less pleased at this sudden promotion than you might expect. "You can't put your odours in someone else's premises. So . . . do you want to help me out with that?" This is the sort of question that expects the answer "Sure!" and gets it.

If you are visibly the manager, you could say someone else is making the smells. Please don't. I'd hate to see you get hurt. "It's your odour. It's you. It's no one else. You gotta fix this right away. If I get no more complaints, you don't see me any more." Rambo was thumping his black leather chest. The restaurateur was spreading his arms in a wide deprecating gesture. Body language alone told you who was winning.

Smell is a difficult thing to convey on TV but Rambo has a dash of drama about him. Well, you could have guessed that, couldn't you? "Oh man!" he cries, reeling back in pain. "Oh boy! That's a real phewee!" And he has a line of dialogue that makes Clint Eastwood sound chatty. "I'm a City Inspector. I gotta inspect." He held out his huge shield of office. "That's why I got the badge."

This man takes no prisoners. "We don't issue warnings. Warnings we don't issue. Simple as that. A continuous offender may be closed down. We don't fool around. We go in. We tell 'em 'We're here to seal your equipment because you haven't abated the problem', and we seal 'em up."

This is breathtaking stuff. How different from our own dear environmental officers. When Basildon residents complained about the smell from the Anglian Sewage Treatment Plant, their chief environmental officer took a philosophical view: "As the years go by, as technology develops, the smell problems will get less. Human beings are so good at smelling. Our nose, perhaps, is our biggest downfall."

As DI Burnside, usually referred to as Bloody Burnside, Chris Ellison was a little too big for The Bill. His special skill was opening his eyes — he has unexpectedly light irises — and blazing away with them. That, more or less, is it. It is probably enough for Ellington (Yorkshire).

The new series covers commendably fresh territory. Ellington, who doesn't seem to have a first name, is a sports promoter and manager. Like Frank Warren without the bullet holes. He is tough and blunt and stuff like that. "You want to watch it," said his faithful secretary Mary (a nice performance from Maureen O'Farrell). "You're almost in danger of being in a good mood." The acting is mostly teak wherever you tap it. In each episode there is a different sports star playing a sore thumb.

However, it will help to pay the stunt man's mortgage, and stunt men haven't had a lot to do lately. Something is almost bound to blow up. In the big finale a young racing driver weaved his way the wrong way round the track. I have absolutely no idea why, but Ellington said he done well.

Eccentric life of a toad

Matt Seaton

Natterjack
by Niall Duthie
Faber 212pp £8.99

LIKE the species of toad to which the title refers, this short novel is a curious creature. It is the fictive memoir of a man named R T Shearer, told in his retirement in some non-specific spot by the Mediterranean. In fact, there is a great deal of non-specificity in the novel, which deliberately abstains from any unnecessary clutter of context: except that the action takes place in a "hard-wintered country" we can take to be Scotland, there is little reference generally to place, age, or any external event.

But the absence of extraneous detail allows Duthie to delineate all the more finely the characters and circumstances which have defined his narrator's life.

The "natterjack" of the title derives from Shearer's school nickname "toad". Like much schoolboy abuse, its object is quite arbitrary — there is nothing particularly toadyish about Shearer. But, in a way that we see is entirely typical of his sardonic stoicism, Shearer adopts the nickname, refines it (by turning "toad" into the rarer, more quirky "natterjack") and makes it his own. Part of the memoir's stealthy dry humour lies in this habit of reverse anthropomorphism: Shearer delights in thinking himself to be, and to behave like, a natterjack.

The novel starts at school because this is where Shearer encounters MacBeth and begins a lifelong friendship, through university and into business, through marriage and bereavement.

MacBeth is Shearer's one great passion, a love which remains unrequited and certainly unconsummated. MacBeth marries young a woman named Gruoch, a sort of bloodless Lady Macbeth with whom Shearer enjoys a prickly intimacy. Shearer allows himself to be talked into a belated marriage of his own — which fails in comically predictable fashion. Shearer outlives both Gruoch and MacBeth, and the novel ends in a characteristic state of melancholy.

The novel's lack of context also gives his memoir a timeless, but curiously period, flavour — an effect reinforced by the old-fashioned cultivation of Shearer's prose style. English was not his mother tongue; in fact, he had none, but was chatted to by parents and nurse in a polyglottal mish-mash. The consequence is that he uses English with a lack of spontaneity perhaps, but with a precision that would be uncharacteristic of a native speaker. For Duthie to have imagined and captured this "voice" is an extraordinary achievement.

An eccentric book in every sense, Natterjack is a challenging read, but it is also intensely rewarding and memorable. It would be tempting to say "warts and all", but Duthie was there first with the joke.

Unbandaged eyes in the ghetto

Maya Jaggi

Dangerous Love
by Ben Okri
Phoenix House 325pp £15.99

THOSE familiar with Ben Okri's fiction through his Booker prize-winning epic The Famished Road (1991) will be surprised by this, his sixth novel. Returning, he says, to "traditional narrative", he eschews the marvellous spirit world through which he illuminated and allegorised the plight of a perpetually still-born country and the betrayed dreams of its poor.

Dangerous Love, his most accessible novel to date, is set in the 1970s aftermath of Nigeria's civil war, and grounded in a more naturalistic Lagos ghetto. Yet it, too, insists on the survival of the spirit — both in the crossed love that compels the story, and in the awakening artistic vision of its hero.

Omovo, a young painter of almost child-like innocence, has his scalp shaved "by accident" at the hands of an apprentice barber, lending him an aura of mourning — absurdly misunderstood as an artist's gimmick, or as revolt. A kind of Dostoevskian idiot, he comforts small children, upsets his office boss by refusing bribes and suffers helplessly as he and a neighbour's proud but abused wife, Ifeyiwa, fall in love.

His losses are compounded when Ifeyiwa's jealous husband tears up his drawings, and his first painting at a Lagos gallery exhibition (graced by "a celebrity from the army", and scathingly satirised) is seized for "mocking national progress". It depicts the "snot-coloured scumpool" in Omovo's


Ben Okri . . . Survival of the spirit in a landscape of corruption

slum compound — a "vanishing scumscape", as the gallery manager would have it.

Scum is the insistent metaphor for a landscape of moral corruption and physical squalor. As Omovo's vitality is sapped by jostling for buses and the communal bathroom, Okri's acute eye dwells on the sights and smells of the ghetto, with its mosquitoes and bucket latrines, festering in the "airless trapped heat".

There are fine passages on the elusive act of creation — the fear and suspense before an empty canvas, the feverish surge as the flow begins, total absorption and self-forgetting, and the exhaustion, self-doubt or serenity that follow.

But the wandering painter's epiphanic revelations, his "heightened moments" of consciousness, are often deflated by bathetic intrusions. As his imagination soars, he steps on a lump of excrement, or is startled by someone's trumpeting nose-blow, drawing the tension between the creative impulse and the miring chaos of the ghetto.

Omovo and a journalist friend stumble upon the body of a young girl ritually murdered and mutilated in the park — a death the police and press fail to investigate. The murder is less a mystery than a symptom. It echoes wartime "Ibo-hunting" atrocities and the fate of the schoolgirl Ifeyiwa bought by bride price. It also reflects the predicament of a generation bequeathed chaos and squandered oil money, a country ravaged by history, women thwarted by men.

Omovo's resolve to paint is fed by his terror of succumbing to the self-destruction bred in the ghetto. The father he sees as a failure (though "to fail was not a crime", he muses) is tortured by dreams of reconciliation with the elder sons he has disowned. Omovo's ambivalent and unexpressed love for his father is among the most moving aspects of the novel.

Its heart, though, belongs to the lovers, with the enchantment of twilight walks through the desolation and detritus of the shanty town, and stolen moments of love-making. It is apt that Omovo's initial "scumscape" should be awash with "glittering, dislocated eyes", since this a novel about learning to see. His inevitable suffering produces what he calls his "first real painting", rites of grief having "unbandaged" his eyes.

It is also about learning to act. Dr Okocha, the ageing Ibo artist and sign-painter, tells him: "If you tell the truth you are in trouble. But if you see the truth and you keep quiet your spirit begins to die." He adds: "You are a man — an artist — a warrior. Use your own weapons." Omovo transforms his passivity into a resolve to "bear witness". He paints as an act of redemption, "to transform powerlessness, impotence, failure, failure of vision, the victim's heritage".

As the author notes in an afterword, Dangerous Love is a renewed attempt at his second novel, The Landscapes Within, written when he was 21 but, he feels, "unrealised by youthful craft". It in some ways contains a writer's manifesto: "The highest function of art was to make people feel more, see more, feel more fully, see more truthfully." Okri offers no cheap hopes, no saccharine belief that love-in-the-ghetto conquers all. But this compassionate, unsentimental novel, with its modest truths, remains true to his persistent concerns with the resilience of the spirit and the task of re-dreaming a post-colonial world.

Hearth of the matter

Jonathan Dyson

Mr Clive & Mr Page
by Neil Bartlett
Serpent's Tail 207pp £9.99

AFTER the prologue, which introduces us to a family house in London's Mayfair in the late 1880s, Neil Bartlett's engrossing second novel leapfrogs to the beginning of the story proper. It is Christmas Eve 1956 in the north London bedsit of Mr Page, or "Mr Page, Banking" as he is known at Selfridges where he has spent his whole working life.

Mr Page lives alone. He has not really bothered with Christmas this year, apart from getting in a few bottles and buying himself a dressing gown, which he wraps ready to be opened the following day. He has also bought a set of notepads and, with the gas turned on full, he begins to write the story of something which happened 30 years ago.

It was another Christmas Eve, in 1923, and like this one it was beginning to snow. Mr Page had been coming out of the London and Provincial Turkish Baths in Jermyn Street when he bumped into a striking young gentleman in a cashmere coat. The two of them nearly slipped on the ice but the man grabbed Mr Page by the arms and for a moment they held each other face to face, their breath mingling in front of them in the cold: "an odd way for two men to meet". The stranger is Mr Clive B Vivian, the grandson to whom the prologue is dedicated. The curious thing is that Mr Clive and Mr Page look exactly alike.

Ignoring social proprieties, Mr Clive invites Mr Page around to his home, the home of the prologue. Another coincidence emerges: the two share the same 21st birthday, three months hence. Mr Clive, the only surviving family member, is apparently due to come into his fortune, but is there a fortune? Apart from an old butler, and the beautiful, white-haired Gabrijels from Riga, there don't appear to be any servants in the huge house. And what exactly is Mr Clive skirting around, during their tense and emotionally charged encounters? So the story proceeds, cutting between an increasingly inebriated 1950s Mr Page and a mysterious 1920s.

At the novel's heart is a consideration of how homosexual men managed their lives before decriminalisation. This is what the protagonists recognise in each other, the thing which crosses social divides. And it is presumably no coincidence that the house without fire in its hearths, with everything hidden away and silenced, dates from the same year (1885) in which male homosexual acts were first made illegal in Britain.

The house stands for the passionless and closeted Victorian morality under which the characters labour. Told with economy and occasional, shocking splashes of colour, this novel stands as a challenge to more conventional gay histories, fictional and otherwise.

Unanimous seals of approval

Joanna Carey

THE shortlist for the Guardian Children's Fiction Award was one of unusual breadth and diversity. It was clear from the outset that the enthusiasm generated by each of the six novels was going to make it more then usually difficult to isolate a winner. During the lengthy proceedings, though, two vastly different books nudged their way to the top of the pile; and stayed there. One, Philip Pullman's Northern Lights, was a huge, challenging fantasy ("an astonishing achievement" said one judge); the other, Alison Prince's The Sherwood Hero, was a school/family-based story with "real contemporary relevance" that addressed some tough issues in a way that was both "exciting and accessible".

Aside from all literary considerations, we had on the one hand a big, magnificently produced hardback (part of a trilogy), a weighty 400 pages at the princely sum of £12.99; and on the other an eminently pocketable paperback original — just 154 pages skimpily clad in a not very memorable cover, at a child-friendly price of £3.99. After hours of discussion the unanimous decision of a jury keen to recognise the needs of a wide spectrum of readers was to broaden the whole thing out, just this once, and to make it a joint award.

The other shortlisted books were Raider by Susan Gates; The Snake-stone by Berlie Doherty; No Turning Back by Beverley Naidoo; and The Wreck Of The Zanzibar by Michael Morpurgo. The judges were Nina Bawden, Terence Blacker, Anthony Browne and Lesley Howarth.

The queen of heartaches

David Horspool

The Unruly Queen:
The Life of Queen Caroline
by Flora Fraser
Macmillan 537pp £20

HENRY SINGLETON'S painting of The Wedding Of The Prince Of Wales And Princess Caroline shows the couple gazing into each other's eyes as the Prince makes his wedding vows. The ceremony itself was less decorous.

The Archbishop of Canterbury pointedly repeated "the passage in which the Prince engages to live from that time in nuptial fidelity with his consort"; the Archbishop was thinking not only of the Prince's reputation for licentiousness, but his secret (and unlawful) earlier "marriage" to the Catholic widow Maria Fitzherbert. He committed no infidelity on his wedding night, however. Caroline later confided that he passed it "under the grate, where he fell, and where I left him".

Such was the inauspicious beginning of a union which, while bearing superficial resemblance to the troubled royal marriages of today, far surpassed them in acrimony and scandal. Flora Fraser's judicious book shows how the Prince — hostile and unpleasant from the first — effected the transformation of his wife from an independent-minded but sheltered girl into a formidable and unpredictable enemy.

As the daughter of the Duke of Brunswick and the niece of George III, Caroline was an ideal candidate when the Prince decided on a "proper" marriage. It was not considerations of extending the dynasty which were uppermost in his mind when he settled on Caroline. It was money, or the lack of it.

The Prince's debts amounted to a staggering £630,000, and Prime Minister Pitt assured him that Parliament would pay them off, as well as raising his Civil List allowance to that of a married man, if he took a wife. After the wedding, however, it became clear that Parliament would not bear this imposition.

If the immediate reasons for making the match were frustrated, there was little chance of the joys of married life making up for it. The nervous bride only made matters worse that night by making coarse references to the Prince's latest lover, Lady Jersey. Her behaviour "fixed his dislike". Although a child was conceived in the first week of the marriage, the Prince and Princess lived apart, though initially under the same roof, from the beginning.


Queen Caroline . . . The rows with her husband transfixed the nation but ultimately destroyed her BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY

The rest of Caroline's life was spent in living up to the poor opinion which her husband had so unjustly conceived of her. The obstacles which the Prince placed in the way of her seeing her daughter, Charlotte, made her dote on other children, among them one Willy Austin, whom she adopted.

This little boy, whose parents had struggled to provide for him after the father was dismissed from the Dockyard, was the occasion of the first secret inquiry, known as the Delicate Investigation, into the Princess's affairs, in which it was alleged that Willy was the Princess's natural son. But Willy's true parentage was easily verified, and the investigation only heightened the suspicion and maliciousness that surrounded the marriage.

When the continent of Europe appeared safe again, following the exile of Napoleon to Elba, it was unsurprising that Caroline obtained permission to travel abroad. Caroline's behaviour became increasingly erratic and unsuitable. While in Rome, she struck up a friendship with Lucien Bonaparte, Napoleon's brother. But it was her taking of an Italian lover, Pergami, which was to have the greatest repercussion.

When she returned, in 1820, to England, to claim her place as Queen Consort following the death of the old King, the insult was too much to bear and the Prince demanded a divorce.

The notorious "trial" failed not because her adultery was unproven, but because the political climate was against it. The queen, seen as a victim of the Establishment, became a focus for Radical discontent, and during her trial the London mob ran riot. Eventually, however, it was her husband who triumphed, barring her from the coronation.

Caroline, defeated at the last, was taken ill and died soon afterwards. The great events of her day — Trafalgar, Waterloo, the agitation for parliamentary reform — seemed a mere backdrop to the messy quarrels of the royal couple, and their resonance is heard only distantly in Flora Fraser's account.

Liquid earnings

Alex Clark

High Latitudes
by James Buchan
The Harvill Press 192pp
£14.99hbk, £9.99pbk

AT A POINT towards the end of James Buchan's novel High Latitudes, the Earl of Bellarmine asks his young wife a question as he relates to her a piece of family history: "Jane, are you being deliberately obtuse?" It is a question that readers of this astonishingly elliptical narrative might feel is covertly directed at them, as they struggle to compose a series of achronological fragments into a coherent story.

The trouble is that there seem to be several stories going on at the same time: a romance, a financial thriller, even a recasting of 18th century picaresque. And the novel's considerable power derives from the variety of readings which offer themselves, as one tableau succeeds another.

At the centre of the web stands Jane herself; it is interesting, ironic even, that her level of understanding is called into question, because much of the story turns on her acuity. At its start that sharpness has brought her to the top of her profession: the managing director of a textile manufacturing company which, we believe, she has revived from near-death by a combination of will and mathematical genius.

Jane's problems appear entirely within her grasp, from the threatened strike at an ailing plant in her native Motherwell to the financial problems of her aristocratic ex-husband, heavily invested in a pre-crash Lloyd's syndicate. She is the image of a cartoon business woman, spouting economic gobbledegook and reducing men to tears, all the while dressed in an Armani suit.

There would be no point in creating such an apparently impregnable scenario without then destroying it. The Stock Market and Wall Street plummet, Lloyd's surety begins its spectacular slide towards limitless liability, the strike hits home. The writing is immediately thick with bewildering fiscal detail: gross profit margins, price/earnings ratios, selling short and modality are juxtaposed with sudden, shocking *aperçus* into the characters' thoughts and feelings.

During the course of this expertly managed welter of obfuscation — the author intervenes from time to time to commiserate with our confusion or to give us a quick bluffer's guide lesson — only Jane has the prescience to ask "What happens if you have more than one catastrophe?" Accumulating catastrophes and an almost apocalyptic sense of impending disaster are what fill the remainder of the book, as the disintegration of Jane's professional life is interspersed with scenes from her past — her short-lived marriage, her flirtation with the very highest of British society, and, above all, her heroin addiction.

Money, of course, stands for the possibility of what we might have; it forces the issue of what we really desire. Throughout the characters pursue money, win it, lose it, give it up, waste it and talk about it endlessly, without ever seeming to get closer to what they might possibly want. The development of Jane's character proceeds by a similar series of binary oppositions — a heroine who is also a heroin addict, an acute thinker who is also obtuse, an object of desire who is apparently celibate.

The parallel metaphor to money is another unstable entity, ice, which is first mentioned in the epigraph and then encountered on a larger scale when Johnny Bellarmine mounts a polar expedition in impetuous homage to an adventuring ancestor. Stranded in a crevasse field with death approaching, Johnny conjures up Jane's image to solace and advise him: like the ice, with its beguiling ability to be solid or liquid, preserver or destroyer, her ghostly presence has the power to console and torment.

Buchan is a clever writer, as his reworking of the cold-war thriller in Heart's Journey In Winter (winner of last year's Guardian Fiction Prize) demonstrated; and High Latitudes is a cleverly constructed and executed novel. But for all its power, it stays too little in the imagination, as if the author has second-guessed your confusions and compounded them, the better to teach you how to read.

Audio books Brian Jenner

The Ultimate Fairy Tale Collection (Hodder Headline, 2hrs, £7.99)

NOT EVERYBODY lives happily ever after in this collection of fairy tales: Cinderella's sisters get their eyes pecked out by pigeons. Joss Ackland, Judi Dench and Simon Callow read both the favourites like Little Red Riding Hood and some less well-known ones like The Nightingale And The Rose: These are proper narratives which don't patronise children and keep parents listening.

The Woman Who Walked Into Doors, by Roddy Doyle (Reed Audio, 3hrs, £7.99)

GER RYAN turns Irish writer Roddy Doyle's latest novel into an Alan Bennett-style "talking head". Paula Spencer is 39, a battered wife and an alcoholic. Suspense builds around her husband Charlo, shot dead a year after he has broken up their marriage. A compelling story that is sending shockwaves around Ireland.

Dad's Army, The Menace from the Deep (BBC Radio Collection, 2hrs, £7.99)

THE VISUAL gags seem to have been cut in favour of the aural ones (which rely on lots of snoring) but no matter. It's still timeless entertainment. John Snagge, the BBC announcer who died recently, appears as himself. Future generations will marvel that such a voice ever existed.

The Duchess of Malfi, by John Webster (HarperCollins, 2hrs, £7.99)

THE BEST way to appreciate Webster's lugubrious poetry and hideous imagery is to hear it on tape, without having to see the spilt guts and blood which tend to be off-putting. A reissue of a 1968 recording with Jeremy Brett and Robert Stephens. Exquisite voices.

A Time to Dance, by Melvyn Bragg (Hodder Headline, 3hrs, £8.99)

NARRATOR Ronald Pickup tries to turn the retired Cumbrian bank manager into a booming Othello. You don't even need to fast-forward to the sexy bits, they crop up every two minutes. Keep the volume low.

Silent observer

Paul Evans


ILLUSTRATION: BARRY LARKING

SHE WAS watching me long before I saw her. She seemed part of a branch, close against the trunk of a large beech overhanging the edge of wet woodland at the southern end of the Wrekin. Her plumage echoed all the colours of the wood: the beech's greeny grey, the oak's rich tannin, the alder's russet, the birch's dusty silver. The dark yew shadow of her eyes fixed me with a deep enclosing silence.

Although I've looked into the gaze of an owl before, it's always a moment of transfixed stillness. This stillness unites submerged threads of mood and feeling, just as she united earthly fertility and underworld ghostliness for those who trod this path through spring woods thousands of years before me. Her face appears in neolithic mother-goddesses. She was the Indo-European prototype of the classical Minerva. She was venerated by early Celtic cults. And then she vanished into the twilight of legend and superstition. To the Scots she became the night-hag. To the Welsh *aderyn y corff* — corpse bird. She was Blodeuwedd who killed her husband the god Lleu, and was turned into an owl.

Suddenly her head spun round to face the wood and I realised that she had been watching me from the centre of her back. Her wings opened and with a few crushingly silent beats she was gone. Tawny wings into the tawny wood. She left behind stillness which even birdsong couldn't break. Her plumage colours scattered into the trees.

The point of this — the significance of the owl and the potency that she carries as a symbol — is that there is a wood for her to vanish in. The owl's signature can only be written here. Another owl in another forest, on the other side of the world from this Shropshire hill, also carries dreams into the trees. The spotted owl has become a symbol of resistance to the clearing of ancient forests in the American Pacific Northwest. Here, people fighting the destruction of forests see in the wild life of the owl what is missing in their rootless culture: an attachment to landscape, habitat, place.

That owls and trees are inextricably linked has been a hard ecological lesson to be learned. And for many places, learned too late. As the environmental philosopher Holmes Rolston said, "The forest is where the 'roots' are, where life rises from the ground. A wild forest is, after all, something objectively there. Beside it, culture, with its artefacts, is a tissue of subjective preference satisfactions."

Despite the fears, hopes and dreams we project into the lives of Nature it remains free of our cultures. Nature is not what it is for us — we should be what we are for it. And so when the owl and I meet on a path, it is a moment of recognition and then a parting of ways, each of us making our way through the wood according to our natures.

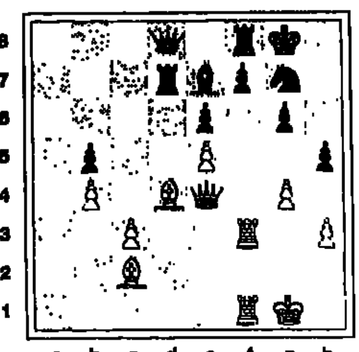
The wood remains, as it has for centuries. In this part of the world that is almost a miracle. Britain has only 10 per cent tree cover, and most of that is plantation. In the last 50 years we have lost over half of our ancient woodland and much more than half our owls. The mire wood that the owl vanished into is a sliver of alder, birch and holly growing from a sedgy swamp where spring water oozes from the bottom of the hill. From here ditches and streams begin a journey south through wooded dingles to the River Severn.

In these woods, just as the flush of life is being drawn from dark mud, just as the mud gives life to the river, the owl's silence held everything. She held the buds from opening, the stream from flowing, and in her gaze held that deeply buried knowledge that Spring is both sex and death.

Chess Leonard Barden

IGNOMINIOUS defeat in last week's game in Amsterdam stung Garry Kasparov, and he recovered with a series of wins later in the tournament. At the end he shared first prize with Topalov, the young Bulgarian whose earlier victory over the world champion caused such a stir. En route, Kasparov defeated Kramnik, the 20-year-old who shares the No 1 spot with him in the latest international rankings, but had a lucky escape against Nigel Short.

Britain's best player has a terrible score as Black against the Russian, but with White it's a different story. Short missed several good winning chances in their 1993 world title match, and confidently created yet another winning position against Kasparov at Amsterdam before, perhaps predictably, blowing it.



Fearing loss of a pawn by Bxb4 cxb4 Rxd4, Short switched a rook to defence by 1 Rb1?? He had a forced win by 1 gxh5! Nxh5 2 Rxf7! Rxf7 3 Rxf7 Kxf7 4 Qxg6+ Kf8 5 Qh6+ Ng7 6 Bg6 when the mating threat is decisive.

Final scores were: Kasparov, Topalov 6½; Anand, Short 5; Kramnik, Lautier 4½.

Kasparov-Seirawan, Queen's Gambit

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6 3 Nf3 d5 4 Nc3 Nbd7 Most grandmasters prefer to delay the QN's development in this opening where Na6, Nc6, or leaving the knight a while on b8 are all options.

5 Qc2 dxc4 6 e4 c5 7 dxc5 Bxc5 8 Bxc4 a6 9 a4 Qc7 10 0-0 Ng4 11 h3! A long-term sacrifice to control the dark squares. If Black's N was now at e6 rather than d7 he would have an instant win by Nd4!

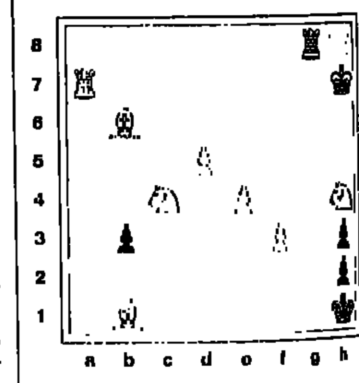
Nxf2? Nde5 12 Nxe5 (12 hxg4? Nxf3+ 13 gxf3 Qg3+ draws) Nxe5 13 Be2 Bd7 still looks near-equal, since White's Qc2 and Be2 are misplaced in support of f4-f5.

12 Rxf2 Bxf2+ 13 Qxf2 Qxc4 14 Qg3 f6?! 0-0 15 Bh6 g6 may be better, though White still has a pleasant choice of 16 Bxf8 Nxf8 17 Qd6 or 16 Rf1 Rd8 17 e5.

15 Qxg7 Qc5+ 16 Kh1 Qf8 17 Qg4 Qf7 18 e5! Rg8 19 Qe4 f5 20 Bg5 h6 21 Bh4 Qg6 22 Rg1 Nf8 23 Qb4 Rg7 24 Ne2 b5 25 axb5 Rd7 26 Nf4 Qf7 27 Rc1 Bb7 28 bxa6 Bxf3 If Rxa6 29 Qb5 Ra8 30 Rc7 is a deadly pin.

29 gxf3 Rda7 30 Rg1 Rxa6 31 Nh5 Kasparov plans mate at e7, and there's no good defence. **Qc7 32 Rg7 Ra1+ 33 Kg2 Qc2+ 34 Bf2 Resigns.** If R1a7 35 Nf6+ and 36 Qxf8 mate.

No 2418



White mates in four moves, against any defence (by Nevil Chan, 1995). Black has only one legal move, but this is wickedly difficult.

No 2417: 1 Bh5 Ke5 2 Qe3+ Kf6 3 Ne8. If 1 ... Kd3 2 Nb5 Ke4 (f4 3 Qe2) 3 Qd4. If f4 2 Bg6+ Ke5 3 Qb2.

Quick crossword no. 311



Across

1 Agitated (10)
7 Rapturous (8)
8 An aquatic mammal — close up (4)
9 Shout (4)
10 Loss of memory (7)
12 Hurdy-gurdy (6-5)
14 Weather (7)
16 Uninteresting — piece of scenery (4)
19 Advanced — the time for sacrifice (4)
20 Feud (8)
21 Dereliction (10)

Down

1 Rot (5)
2 Colonist (7)
3 Roster (4)
4 Rare (8)
5 Hurry (5)
6 Allowance (6)
11 Carnival (8)
12 Soldier's accommodation (6)
13 Old sailing ship (7)
15 Bishop's headgear — worn at 45°? (5)
17 Name (5)
18 Difficulty (4)

Last week's solution

C	O	V	E		O	C	C	A	S	I	O	N
O		I		R		I		D		S		E
N	U	C	L	E	A	R		A	G	R	E	E
T		A		C		C		G		A		D
E	E	R	I	E		U	N	E	V	E	N	
M				D		M				L		D
P	L	A	Y	E	D	F	O	R	T	I	M	E
T		W				E		A				C
	S	K	E	W	E	R		V	A	G	U	E
S		W		E		R		I		U		A
A	W	A	R	D		N	O	N	P	L	U	S
C		R		G		C		E		C		E
K	E	D	G	E	R	E	E		S	H	E	D

Bridge Zia Mahmood

PAUL HACKETT, Ian Monachan, Jason and Justin Hackett, Tony Forrester and Andrew Robson won the first division of the British Premier League by the proverbial mile. They finished on 135 Victory Points out of a possible 205, more than a match clear of second place.

So close was the remainder of the competition that three VPs separated second from sixth — but this truly was a one-horse race.

The British selectors had no hesitation in naming the Hackett team as British representatives in the Olympiad later this year, which marks yet another milestone in their remarkable careers.

This deal from the final round of League matches posed a number of problems in the bidding and play.

Take the South hand and decide what you would open as dealer, at love all:

♥Q106 ♥82 ♦104 ♣A109763

Pass? I would not criticise that choice, and you may have had difficulty finding an alternative.

The modern expert is quick to preempt, however, and three clubs was the selection at a number of tables. The spotlight now moves on to North:

♠AJ9 ♥AKQ75 ♦AQ ♣KQ8

Your partner opens three clubs at love all. What would you bid?

With a partner whose clubs could be J10xxxx at a pinch, it's wise to use Blackwood before leaping to a grand slam. In response to your 4NT, your partner shows an ace, and you commit your side to seven clubs with a degree of trepidation.

Take the West cards next:

♠K87532 ♥J ♦K9652 ♣5

You have heard this auction:

South	West	North	East
3♣	No	4NT	No
5♦	No	7♣	No
No	No		

and you have to select a lead. Make your choice before looking at the full hand.

Back in the South seat, you are declarer in seven clubs on the layout that follows. You have six club tricks, three hearts and two aces on top. If the hearts divide 3-3, you have 13 tricks. If they divide 4-2, you can set up the fifth heart for your 12th trick and take a finesse in either spades or diamonds for your

North
♠ A J 9
♥ A K Q 7 5
♦ A Q
♣ K Q 8

West
♠ K 8 7 5 3 2
♥ J
♦ K 9 6 5 2
♣ 5

East
♠ 4
♥ 10 9 6 4 3
♦ J 8 7 3
♣ J 5 2

South
♠ Q 10 6
♥ 8 2
♦ 10 4
♣ A 10 9 7 6 3

13th. But if the hearts divide 5-1, as they did, you will have to take the spade finesse — the diamond finesse by itself will not help you.

This means that if, as West, you led a spade, you would probably defeat the contract.

With options available in hearts and diamonds, declarer would be unlikely to risk the spade finesse at trick one. He would probably go up with the ace, hoping for 4-2 hearts and the diamond finesse or 3-3 hearts, and he would go down to defeat.

Did anyone actually find a spade lead away from the king against a grand slam? Only Tony Forrester. ©

Court shock as referee is blamed for crippling injury

Duncan Campbell

SHOCK waves reverberated through the sporting world at the weekend after the High Court in London ruled that a rugby referee was responsible for the paralysis of a player through his failure to control a match.

In the first ruling of its kind, the player, Ben Smoldon — who has been a tetraplegic since being injured during a match in 1991 — won his case against the match referee, Michael Nolan.

Mr Smoldon went to court seeking £1 million in damages. The final sum he will receive is to be assessed by the court at a later date.

An action against the opposing team's tight-head prop, Thomas Whitworth, failed. Mr Smoldon had accused him of causing the accident by collapsing scrums deliberately.

Referees' associations covering all leading sports were stunned by the decision and were seeking legal advice. The ruling could have ramifications for all levels of sport. One cricket umpire described the issue as a minefield, and other referees said it could lead to people refusing to officiate in games without legal immunity.

Mr Smoldon, from Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands — a promising player who had represented his county as a hooker at under-19 level — was injured at the age of 17 when a scrum collapsed during a game between Sutton Coldfield and Burton-on-Trent Colts.

He claimed that Mr Nolan, who was backed by the Rugby Football Union, did not keep proper control of the game and that his injury was a result of this failure.

The court heard earlier that a linesman had warned Mr Nolan that those in the front row of the scrum could be hurt if action was not taken. Mr Nolan did not recall this.

Smoldon: injured in scrum

Mr Nolan, aged 54, an army cadet force administrator, said he did not see any deliberate unlawful behaviour in the scrum which led to the injury. Two players had been sent off, but the game had not been excessively violent. He recalled about eight collapsed scrums, not the 25 alleged in court.

Mr Justice Curtis agreed that Mr Nolan had fallen below the standard of a reasonably competent referee.

"In important respects, relating to the scrum, he failed to exercise reasonable care and skill in the prevention of collapses by efficient instruction to the front rows and in the use of the 'crouch, touch, pause and engage' rule, thereby reducing the impact of the engagement to an acceptable level," said the judge.

Mr Smoldon said after the decision: "I am relieved that the judge has found that I am blameless and found I did not contribute to my accident."

He added that he did not want to discourage anyone from playing rugby.

Mr Nolan's solicitors, Davis Arnold Cooper, indicated that he may appeal against the decision.

"Our client is deeply disappointed by the decision," they said. "Whilst each case of this nature turns on its own particular facts, the implication which this decision has for refereeing in sport in general needs to be carefully considered."

Spokesmen for the Rugby Football Union and Football Association referees would not comment, saying they had not yet studied the transcript of the case, but the decision has already reverberated around the sporting world. There are implications for cricket umpires who fail to control dangerous bowling, football referees who allow violent tackles to go unpunished, or boxing referees who do not intervene in contests early enough.

Graham Bullock, of the Association of Cricket Umpires, said: "We've all been aware of this particular case and we are obviously very concerned."

One of the country's most experienced football referees, David Elleray, said: "It may discourage people from refereeing sports, particularly at lower levels. They may think, 'If someone gets hurt, I may be sued'." Mr Elleray added that the laws of football had been amended last year to protect referees from just such claims. The new law stated that referees were not liable for injuries during a game, from anything from an icy pitch to dangerous play.

The judgment could also affect school sport. Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers, said it could lead to teachers refusing to referee games unless they were guaranteed protection from legal action.

Rugby Union Leicester 31 World XV 40

Tigers wilt in Twickenham heat

Robert Armstrong

ON THE sun-splashed Twickenham turf a dynamic World XV ended Leicester's 22-match winning sequence with a six-try bonanza that earned them the inaugural Sanyo Cup and a host of English friends.

After the exhibition, Leicester's chief executive, Peter Wheeler, confirmed that the former Australia coach, Bob Dwyer, who had prepared the World side, might be joining the Courage league champions. Dwyer said: "I have had talks with Leicester and obviously these will continue in more detail while I am here."

Leicester used half a dozen replacements, a tactic which caused them to fritter away a 19-point lead in the final half-hour. But none of their fans appeared to mind, given the five tries the Tigers scored in an opening 45-minute salvo.

For a long period Leicester seemed to be on their way to an easy win, and after an early bout of polite sparring they broke through with the most spectacular try seen at Twickenham for years. When Kardooni swept the ball infield from a line-out at halfway Hackney suddenly popped up on a scything run that carried him towards Serevi; but, switching direction, the Leicester wing sprinted to the right flag where he squeezed over.

Shortly afterwards the Tigers, who played expansive football as though to the manner born, increased their lead to 12-0 with a converted try that owed much to an intelligent incursion by Liley. The full-back delivered a perfect transfer to the flanker Tarbuck, who cruised home gently to the left corner.

In the second quarter the tempo quickened. Serevi opened the World XV scoring, taking a short pass from Yoshida near halfway and goose-stepping away from a tackle for a try at the posts.

The biggest cheer of the afternoon was raised for the Leicester skipper Richards, who profited from a generous ricochet near the right touchline after a constructive build-up by Johnson. The England No 8 galloped away from two defenders to make a simple conversion for Liley with a touchdown near the posts.

Minutes later, the pacy French flanker Cabannes made a superb solo break from the edge of the Leicester 22, holding off a challenge by Back to ground the ball and reduce his side's deficit to 19-12. However, Leicester won a penalty in front of the posts, Kardooni took a quick tap and Potter came through on the burst to score at the posts.

Early in the second half Tarbuck was driven over for his second try in typically dynamic style by the Tigers' pack, extending the lead to 31-12.

Stung by the size of the deficit, the World XV moved up a gear, and were rewarded with a try by the World XV captain Sella, who hinted at the havoc he may cause among English defences next season.

Joseph and the Argentinian replacement Pichot helped the World XV take the lead for the first time before another replacement, Matsuda, outflanked the Leicester defence on the left and cut across for a final score at the posts.

Sports Diary Shiv Sharma

Deadline for England

ENGLAND have been given until the end of this week to make up their mind whether to toe the line of their partners in the Five Nations Championship or face isolation. As the Rugby Football Union refused to shift from its position of negotiating its own television deals, Wales, Scotland, Ireland and France issued a thinly-veiled threat of exclusion from the championship.

They said they intend to "consider the future format" of the competition and suggested that the inclusion of England players in next year's Lions tour of South Africa might also be at risk.

The Five Nations Committee dismissed England's plans as "wholly unacceptable" and told the RFU, in effect, that it must either abandon its aim of going alone by Saturday — the date of the next Five Nations meeting in Dublin — or drop out of the championship from 1998 onwards. Italy could take England's place.

Since the start of the Five Nations Championship 86 years ago, no member has been expelled except France, from 1931 to 1947 over professionalism.

AJAX beat Panathinaikos to reach the Champions' Cup final, where they will meet Juventus on May 22 in Rome. The holders, beaten 1-0 by the Greek champions in Amsterdam, demonstrated the highest class in dominating the semi-final second leg to win 3-0, the Finnish striker Jari Litmanen scoring twice. Juventus lost 3-2 in France to Nantes but triumphed 4-3 on aggregate.

MANCHESTER United striker Eric Cantona, banned last year for eight months for kicking a fan, has been voted Footballer of the Year by the football writers. He polled 36 per cent of the votes, edging out Ruud Gullit, formerly of AC Milan and Holland and currently playing for Chelsea, into second place. Robbie Fowler of Liverpool came third.

PRIZE money at the Wimbledon tennis championships is to increase again — the 17th successive rise. If Pete Sampras holds on to his men's singles title, he will be richer by £392,500 — an increase of £27,500 on last year's figure. Steffi Graf will pick up £353,000 — compared with £328,000 in 1995 — if she keeps her crown. All England Club chairman John Curry said: "We are happy that we are able to offer prize money competitive with world standards."

FORMER England captain, Graham Gooch, and David Graveney have been elected to fill the two vacancies of selectors in a ballot of the 18 first-class counties, the MCC and Minor Counties. They will join chairman Ray Illingworth, team coach David Lloyd and current England captain Mike Atherton in a five-strong selection panel. The Test and County Cricket Board refused to reveal the number of votes cast for each of the eight candidates, which included former all-rounder, Ian Botham.

ANDREW SYMONDS, the 20-year-old British-born batsman whose registration with Gloucestershire last summer caused a furore because of his Australian upbringing, has signed a three-year contract with the county. Symonds, voted Young Cricketer of the Year by journalists last year, was at the centre of a storm when he refused a place on the England A tour of Pakistan. His new contract includes a stringent clause insisting that he will be available to play for England in Test matches if selected.

SOUTH AFRICAN opener Gary Kirsten was his side's hero as they beat India to win the Sharjah Cup by 38 runs. The left hander carried his bat through the entire innings for an unbeaten 115 in South Africa's total of 287-5. India put up a determined fight but were rocked by four run-outs — including Sachin Tendulkar, who made 57 from 71 balls — and finished on 249-9. Kirsten was named both Man of the Match and Man of the Series.



Mike Atherton will captain England in the one-day series against India this summer.

SNOOKER professional Ronnie O'Sullivan could face a disrepute charge after the Canadian No 1, Alain Robidoux, made an official complaint about his behaviour during their first round match in the world snooker championships at Sheffield. O'Sullivan, who played some left-handed shots on his way to a 10-3 victory, admitted he had not shown Robidoux respect. "He didn't deserve any," said the flamboyant 20-year-old.

JAPAN'S Norifume Abe delighted his home crowd when he became the first Japanese rider to win the 500cc motor-cycling Grand Prix for 14 years in Tokyo on Sunday. Riding a Yamaha, he clocked 45min 34.590sec, with Spain's Alex Criville, on a Honda, second — 6.49sec behind the winner. Australia's Michael Doohan, the reigning world champion, finished sixth.

AN ANNOUNCEMENT on the public address system at Highbury last week told a fan: "Your partner has just given birth, and here you are at Arsenal v Spurs. Just to make it worse, she's called the baby Chelsea."

